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K I L M E N Y

VOL. III.



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# K I L M E N Y

BY

WILLIAM BLACK

AUTHOR OF 'IN SILK ATTIRE' 'LOVE OR MARRIAGE?'

In Three Volumes

VOL. III.



LONDON

SAMPSON LOW, SON, AND MARSTON

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OF  
THE THIRD VOLUME.

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# KILMENY.



## CHAPTER I.

### THE VILLA LORENZ.

‘GOOD MORNING, Mr. Sun! How do you do, this morning, and how have you slept? I hope you are going to bring us a bright and pretty day; for the Herr Papakin, and the Frau Mamakin, and Annele, and I are all going out for a walk in the Englischer Garten. Good morning, Mr. Linden-tree! And how have you slept? You—handsome old man that you are—you must not think of turning yellow yet. Good morning, Master Robin! Good morning, Messieurs et Mesdames Sparrows! I shall have some crumbs for you presently.’

I became drowsily aware that the soft and pretty German I heard came from the lips of little Lena Kunzen, who had just thrown her casements open, to let the sunlight into her small chamber, which was apparently next to mine. I jumped out of bed, and found the morning well advanced, a golden flood of light falling over the smooth pastures and stately trees of the English garden, and on the branch of the Isar that runs through, and around, and about them.

The Königin-Strasse of Munich is, as you may know, a long and quiet street that leads down from the Hof-Garten and skirts the Englischer Garten, the handsome trees of which it fronts. Here dwelt the Herr Professor Kunzen, his kindly, commonplace wife, and his wicked and witching little daughter. Anybody who is familiar with the sort of houses in the suburbs of Leipsic, or Berlin, or Baden, will know what the

Villa Lorenz was like — a large, square, white house, with white casements outside all the windows, and with white balconies projecting from the first storey, these balconies hung with trailing creepers of various kinds, tumbling in masses of light green leaves about the white porch. Then a small enclosure in front, with a small white statue, and fountain in the centre, separated from the street by a row of acacias, with here and there a rowan-tree and a sumach, just getting crimson. Behind, a larger garden, with bowers covered with Virginia creepers, and another dirty-white figure and a fountain.

The Professor was a tall, well-made man of about fifty, with a shy, womanish sensitiveness about his ways and manner which did not seem to correspond with his athletic frame and his prodigious pedestrian powers. But it accorded well with his face when



you came to know it — when you got to see its emotional softness, and the quick way that a blush would spring to the pale and rather sunken cheek, whenever the Professor had given way to a sudden access of enthusiasm. Such occasions were rare ; for he was a very shy man, who did not like to disclose himself. He was full of strong and generous sympathies, the fruit of a remarkably simple and childlike nature ; but he had got into such a habit of hiding away his inner feelings, that you would have considered him merely a thoughtful-looking man, timid in manner, and with strong tendencies towards idealism in his dark, soft, deeply-intrenched eyes.

His wife was a short, rather dumpy woman, a shrewd and sensible housekeeper, practical in her notions, and very fond of her husband, over whose negligent habits and odd ways she was continually com-

plaining. I think she looked upon him as half-mad ; and was thankful he had had the sense to marry a woman capable of looking after him and his house. As for his pictures, she knew nothing of them beyond the price they fetched. She was proud to see his name in the papers, and she behaved with circumspection when great people visited the Villa Lorenz ; but she took care to make it understood that she would not talk about art.

‘ He knows enough for both of us,’ she used to say, sensibly ; ‘ I busy myself with other matters.’

Under the circumstances, there could be no great communion between man and wife. The Professor never revealed his solitary enthusiasms to his spouse ; and she was satisfied in doing her duty as regarded the wonderful freshness and purity of the linen of the house, and also as regarded the

cooking. There were several things she always cooked herself; and her honest face beamed with pleasure if you praised her preserves. The Frau Professor's coffee I have never found equalled anywhere.

Now, how did this strangely-assorted couple ever come to have such a daughter as little Lena Kunzen? This small witch, with her short light-brown curls, and her big grey eyes that were full of mischief, was a perpetual torment to her surprised and grieved mother, and a perpetual puzzle to the shy Professor, who used to sit and watch her as if he wondered if this wild creature were really a daughter of his. The fun of it was, that both of them loved her to distraction; for, with a kitten's drollery, she had a kitten's captivating ways, and could get atonement at any moment for her mad pranks, by a little fondling and coaxing. She was about fifteen, but a perfect child

in most respects ; and, doubtless, much of her waywardness of manner and habit had arisen from the fact that she had mixed little with strangers, and had been allowed to do pretty much as she liked in her own home. Sometimes, too, the wild, madcap spirit seemed to go right out of her, and she sat mute and pensive, with a look of her father's dreaminess about her eyes. At such times she used to show a strong resemblance to a portrait of a shoemaker's daughter, which you will find in the second room of Stieler's 'Portraits of the most beautiful women,' in the Festsaalbau. This latter is a face that is unforgettable. It has all the finer characteristics of the intellectual South German face — the broad forehead, the calm, reflective eye, the delicately-shaped nose, the short upper lip, and that peculiar deeply-cut under lip which one never finds out of Germany. Let me add,

here, that my greatest trouble in all my art-studies in Germany, was with this type of face. It seems almost impossible for an English artist to escape from painting the self-consciousness which is the obvious characteristic of the finest English female faces. You will find the type of German face of which I speak painted by English artists, and, while the features are there, there is superadded that pitiful trick of consciousness which is only not a smirk because the lips are thoughtful. The difficulty is to give the wonderful self-possession and self-regardlessness of such a face, without making it merely commonplace and dull. It is a difficulty ; and an Englishman, I fancy, can only get over it by change of climate—by leaving our cold, and fogs, and bustle for the warmer air and the mellower life of the South. If one of the women whom Raphael painted had been introduced

to our life-class as a model, what harsh and coarse interpretations of her would have been the result !

To return to Lena. Her constant companion was a small white goat, which had been given her as a present. It was variously called Anna, Annele, and Aennchen ; and its mistress was fond of expressing her love for her favourite by singing—

Aennchen von Tharau ist, die mir gefällt,  
Sie ist mein Leben, mein Gut und mein Geld ;  
Aennchen von Tharau hat wieder ihr Herz  
Auf mich gerichtet in Freud' und in Schmerz ;

and then, at other times, she would sing, to a tune of her own, the plaintive old lines—

Isch 's Anneli nit do ?  
S' wird regne, wird schneie,  
S' wird 's Anneli g'wiss reue.  
Isch 's Anneli nit do ?

By rights, Aennchen von Tharau should have been a gentle and timid creature, so that she and her mistress might have looked like the

group of the pretty goatherd and her pet, which is a favourite subject for lithographs. On the contrary, the small white Aennchen was a demon of wickedness; and it was fortunate that her malice was not equalled by her strength. She loved to run at children unawares, taking a mean advantage of them from behind, and tumbling them at the feet of their nurses. Indeed, she had all manner of tricks; which were rather encouraged than repressed by her mistress, who used to shout with laughter when Annele had done something especially naughty. The same spirit appeared to dwell in both; and Lena used to lament bitterly that her goat should be prevented by nature from enjoying the fun of hearing my blunders among the German verbs. Lena was wont to tell her friends that, on the first day I dined there, I had offered her some 'Pantoffelnsalat'—an audacious fig-

ment, which used to make her laugh till the tears ran down her cheeks.

Lena had a lover. His name was Franz Vogl; and he was one of the Professor's half-dozen pupils. Vogl was not a handsome lover. Nature seemed to have meant him for a comedian—his face having precisely that odd irregularity which nearly every comic actor exhibits. But in every other way, Franz was a most desirable sweetheart. He was full of fun; he was immensely good-hearted and kind; he was never out of spirits; and he played the zither in a way that won all hearts to him. I have heard the zither played by many people, but never as Franz Vogl played it. In his hands, it became another instrument. It lost all the twanginess of the guitar, and gave forth such wails of passionate feeling—so human-like in the cry—that, when it was all over, the people used to look at Vogl's



humorous, commonplace face, and wonder whether he were not a magician.

‘Franz, Franz,’ Lena would often cry, petulantly, ‘why can’t you teach me to play the zither?’

‘You will never be able to play the zither, Linele.’

He was a Waldshüter, and constantly used the rustic diminutives, and frequently the rustic dialect, he had learnt when young.

‘But why, why, why, Franz? I don’t understand what you say about the thrill at the end of your fingers. Is it electricity?’

‘Perhaps it is. At all events, without that, you will never do more with the zither than what most people do—play a jerky sort of music, in the ordinary, staccato fashion.’

‘And I can see your fingers hovering

over the strings, until the cry of the music in the air makes me think of a human voice overhead, and I get almost afraid. Did you see how that dear little Marie Schleiermann cried last night when you were playing the *Chant bohémien*?’

‘That was because poor Friedrich Kink used to play it. I was a fool not to remember that.’

‘But your playing makes me so wretched sometimes that I am near crying, too. Franz, you are conceited, and you won’t teach me to play the zither because you will have nobody but yourself make people cry.’

‘I will teach you the zither, if you like, Linele.’

‘Oh, yes! To go strum, strum—twang, twang—like old Frau Becher and her guitar. No! I want to be able to make it cry, and sob, and then laugh again; I want to do

everything ; and, oh, my poor Aennchen, I can't do anything.'

With which she would clasp Annele round the neck, and pretend to whimper.

I have never seen any man who enjoyed life better than Franz Vogl. It was a part of his simple and joyous nature to be pleased with whatever he happened to be doing, and that in a hearty, happy way which was remarkably infectious. He was never conscious that he was enjoying himself, as Heatherleigh was ; nor did he pause to estimate the value of his various enjoyments. He sang for the pleasure of singing ; he painted because he liked painting ; he enjoyed a conversation with a waggon-driver about the weather and the fields, or with a learned doctor about the deluge. He enjoyed sleeping, eating, drinking, walking, and sitting still ; and you always found him ready with a joke and a laugh at any time.

.

His father was, in his way, an artist. He had a studio some little distance from Waldshut, and there he got up and painted crucifixes and those various pictures and decorations which adorn the small way-side shrines of the peasantry. He was also a bit of a sculptor, and had himself, with his own methods, hewn out one or two very passable figures for the same purpose. Furthermore he had a moderately-sized farm ; and, Franz being the only son, the farm was to fall to him in due course. So his future was pretty well cared for ; and Franz took good care to enjoy the present.

He was far more of a musician than a painter. Sitting by himself, over his beloved zither, that was his constant companion morning and evening, he used to improvise in the most wonderful fashion ; harmonising his melodies as he went along, until you lost sight of the mechanical effort, and seemed to

hear him speak with this magnificent, many-toned voice. He had a general liking for all the arts, and a tolerable proficiency in several. His pictures were clever, and had a certain novelty of manner about them; but Franz set little store by them, and it was clear he was not going to be a great artist.

‘If I had an ambition,’ he often said to me, ‘it would be to write a whole series of songs in my native dialect, and set them to music.’

‘You can’t feel the want of a hobby much,’ I said, ‘so long as you have your zither.’

‘No,’ he said, ‘I shouldn’t get on very well without my zither. “Öbbis muess me triebe ha, sust het me langi Wül.”\* I always take my zither with me when I go on my

\* ‘Etwas muss man zu treiben haben, sonst hat man lange Weile.’

pedestrian excursions. By the way, you will accompany us on our grand autumn excursion ?'

'I hope so.'

'Down through the Gutach-Thal, and round by the Constance Lake, and then, hey! for a swing through the clear air and the cold sunsets of the Tyrol!'

In the meantime we were busy enough with those opportunities of study which this wonderful city afforded. Every alternate morning we went with the Professor to the Old or the New Pinathothek, and there he, singling out some particular picture, discussed its various characteristics and those of the school to which it belonged. Occasionally we paid a visit to the grand Nibelungen frescoes, not then finished, until Kriemhild, and Siegfried, the red-bearded and dark-browed Hagen, Brünhild, and all the other personages of the mighty drama

were familiar to us as our own friends. I confess that, at first, I was a trifle disappointed with Kriemhild, the

. . . schœne magedîn,  
Daz in allen Landen niht schœners mohte sin ;

and looked upon her face as characterless and wanting in emotional expression. But in time the traditions of English facial painting faded away from me, and I got to understand the stately repose of the women of the old Flemish, and German, and Italian painters. Then we had our exercises in composition, which were grievous things for exposing one's ignorance of the rough material of art. A solecism or anachronism in costume, for example, was instantly picked out by the somewhat wondering Professor, whose severest reproof was a hint that you must have been misled by some theatrical scene. Of all our little company, I was the

most backward in this respect. I knew as little how to deal with such a subject as ‘Savoyardenkinder auf der Wanderschaft,’ as with such a one as ‘Cervantes wird von dem Arnauten Manni als Sklave nach Algier gebracht.’ When the Professor announced that the subject for the following Monday’s sketch would be ‘Carl I. von England nimmt Abschied von seinen Kindern,’ he added, with a smile—

‘This time, Herr Edward’—so he invariably named me, finding some difficulty in pronouncing ‘Ives’—‘you will have the advantage. You must be familiar with the costumes of your own country.’

‘I don’t know that, Herr Professor,’ said I. ‘With its present costume, I am.’

‘The majority of your countrymen are *sans-culottes*—nicht wahr?’ said Franz Vogl with a laugh. ‘However, I suppose Charles I. of England dressed in the French fashion



of the time. You English are fond of French importations, are you not ?'

'Yes; we could afford to do without some of them—eggs and dramas, for example.'

'The chief manufactures of England,' said Vogl, 'are lords and beggars. But you can't produce kings. Let me see, you haven't had an English king since Edward VI.'

'You produce so many here that you can supply the markets of the world with them,' I said, 'and then they have had the advantage of an economical bringing-up.'

'Well, the kings we have sent you, excepting William of Orange, were rather a stupid lot, certainly; but they were a good deal better than the Stuarts.'

'They couldn't be worse,' I said, 'but they tried.'

So the days passed peacefully away, in the quiet, white city. Franz and I became great friends; and many a merry walk we

had, and many a merry chat in the beer-garden 'zum Tivoli,' on the wooden benches, under the great limes, fronting the narrow stripe of the Isar that runs round the Englischer Garten. I had a letter from England, occasionally; sometimes from Polly Whistler, who now managed to put her sharp sayings and her kindly wishes into very well-expressed French, of which she was evidently proud; sometimes from Heatherleigh, who had become a thorn in the side of the dealers; and two letters I had received from Bonnie Lesley, containing abundant gossip about Burnham.

'People have not yet done speaking about "Kilmeny,"' she added. 'When are you going to send us another picture over? And this time, mind, it must be no likeness; or, if a likeness—well, I will say no more. I send you, as you wish, a bit of the great St. John's-wort, from the

Burnham woods. I wrote for it to Hester, who desires to be remembered to you. But I dare say you have forgotten us all, and are walking every evening with some pretty Fräulein, along the long green avenues near the Isar. Or do you buy her gloves in the Maximilien-Strasse? Or do you take her to hear Wagner's operas in the Hof-Theater; and does she call you "du" yet? Good-bye. If you are not too much engaged to answer this impertinent note, address me at Burnham, whither I go on Monday next.'

When I got such a letter as this, breathing of English life and associations, I used to go out into the 'English garden,' and lie down on the banks of the Isar, near that great open space of meadow in the middle of the trees. Lying here, with the bulbous spires of the Domkirche shut out from sight, you might imagine yourself in an English park; and I used to try to make myself

believe that I was looking over upon the Burnham woods. Very few people entered the garden during the day, and those who did kept to the shaded walks under the lindens and elms. Lying quite alone there I used to read and re-read those portions of my letters which spoke of Buckinghamshire, until I should scarcely have been surprised had I seen Miss Hester herself come walking over to me from among the trees. For, indeed, my heart was a sort of carrier-pigeon; and the moment I let it loose, it flew straight back to Burnham, and only folded its wings at the feet of my dear mistress.

## CHAPTER II.

## DAS WANDERLEBEN.

I THANK God for Germany. It was there that I first began to throw off the hideous thrall that had weighed upon my life in England. It was there, properly speaking, that I began to live. Out of that whirl of anxious struggling, with its petty ambitions, its envious competitions, its narrow interests, its bitter fears, that had at one time over-awed and, later on, sickened me, I had got into the more beautiful, simple, joyous life of South Germany. Here was no agonised fretting and scrambling after wealth, but a peaceful moderation, and contented enjoyment of small means. Well do

I remember the half-conscious blush of enthusiasm that passed over the face of the good Professor, as we stood above the great Gutach-Thal, and looked down upon its green fields, its rushing stream, and the steep sides of the mountains covered with a dense green forest. We had come over from Hausach, and walked along the wonderful valley, on either side the precipitous and wooded hills steeped in a glorious sunlight. From Tryberg we had followed the winding road that leads up the mountain to St. Georgen, and now as we stood some five thousand feet above the level of the sea, and looked down into the still, vast hollow, a more charming picture of pastoral life could not have been conceived. Far below us, a long wooden waggon, drawn by a couple of oxen, was coming slowly up the hill. By its side were two women, with large white hats and black rosettes, with

short petticoats, puffy white sleeves, and bronzed arms bare from the elbow. A young girl was with them, whose profuse light-brown hair hung in two long twisted tails down her back. There were few people now in the fields, for the afternoon sun had begun to glow with a lurid brilliancy on the gleaming scarlet bunches of rowans, a row of which beautiful trees came up all the way from Tryberg. One side of the ravine lay in shadow ; along the other the warm light fell on immense stretches of forest that rose up to the pale green sky. Underneath our feet, and yet far above the bottom of the glen, a large hawk sailed in the air, sometimes fluttering for a few seconds, and then poising himself and remaining motionless.

‘I will venture to call this the Happy Valley,’ said the Professor, with a sudden burst of enthusiasm. ‘Here you will find

neither rich people nor poor people ; but all have fair labour, and moderate means, and a healthy and virtuous life. In England, Herr Edward, you are all too rich or too poor ; and your rich are growing rapidly richer, while your poor are growing rapidly poorer. What is your general percentage of pauperism ? ’

‘ Twenty-three per cent., I believe. ’

‘ Herr Je ! ’ exclaimed the Professor, ‘ Here, I will undertake to say, you will not find three people out of every hundred who are unable to work, and who live upon charity. Is it that your taxes weigh too heavily on the poor ; or do you pay too expensively for your kings and their circle ; or is your population increasing more rapidly than your trade ; or are your poor wasteful and extravagant when they have work, and mean-spirited when they have none ? ’

‘ Du ! ’ said Franz, maliciously, addressing



one of our small company, by name Silber. 'Do you know why the Gutach-Thal has always been a prosperous, contented place?'

'No,' said Silber, a heavy-looking, fair young man from the Rhine country, who dressed like a theatrical student, and wore his flaxen hair down to his shoulders.

'Because the people are Protestants. You have not seen a road-side crucifix all the way up from Tryberg.'

'Do the crucifixes keep the corn from growing?' growled the practical Silber, who was a good Catholic and an indifferent painter.

We had all sat down by this time. Almost instinctively Franz unslung the case which held his zither, took out the instrument, laid it across his knees, and let his fingers wander for a second or two over the strings. And then he sang, in a careless sort of fashion, the story of Schiller's maiden who

came, like Kilmeny, no one knew whence,  
into a valley like the one at our feet—

Sie war nicht in dem Thal geboren,  
Man wusste nicht, woher sie kam,  
Und schnell war ihre Spur verloren,  
Sobald das Mädchen Abschied nahm.

And then he sung a tender farewell to the  
Gutach-Thal, and greeted it 'ein tausend  
Mal,' as we got up and went on our way.

Franz was not much of a singer ; but you forgot that in listening to the wonderful tones of the zither. His singing was a sort of excuse for his playing ; and what was lacking in his voice was more than made up by the extraordinary, pathetic power of the instrument that he loved so well. Every spare half-hour of this memorable excursion was devoted to the zither ; and his stock of music was literally inexhaustible. Above all, however, he preferred the old *Volkslieder* of the Black Forest and the Tyrol ;

and many a glad evening we spent in remote country inns, with Franz's music as our only speech.

We stayed this night at St. Georgen, on the top of the mountain. There were no other strangers in the solitary inn except a young girl and her father, who were going on next day to Hausach by the *Eilwagen*. She was a pretty sort of girl, with dark hair and eyes, and a mobile sensitive face. During dinner—we all happened to dine at the same time—Franz became very good friends with the Herr Papa, chiefly by reason of his miraculous flow of stories, which kept the old gentleman laughing from one end of the meal to the other. After dinner, said Franz :

‘Does your daughter sing, sir?’

‘Oh, yes, she sings a little.’

‘Will you be so friendly, Fräulein, as to sing a little song, and I will give you an

accompaniment? Or will you hear me first? My companions are tired of me and my zither; and I shall be glad to have a new audience.'

But we all sat down at the table, when it was cleared, and the candles were lit; then we took out our cigars and pipes, and Franz placed his zither before him.

'Perhaps you can play yourself, Fräulein,' he asked.

'No,' she said, with a smile. 'We are from Cologne.'

'Then our southern songs may be a novelty to you. Do you know "Es ritt ein Jägermann über die Flur"?''

'Ach, Gott, yes! But I could hear it a hundred times,' she said softly.

So he sang the pathetic ballad, and the thrilling joy and tenderness and agony that he woke from the strings of the zither seemed to make the song almost a dramatic

impersonation. You could see the huntsman riding gaily home, blowing his horn to let his 'Herzliebchen' know he was coming. Then his wonder that she was not at the threshold to kiss him—his entrance into the house—no meal ready for him, no wine in his cup; and then his finding his heart's love lying cold and dead among the flowers in the garden. Then, with sharper and bitterer music, how he unbridled his horse for the last time, and set him free; how he took down his gun again from the wall and loaded it with 'deadly lead'; and how with one final, despairing carol of his hunting-song, he 'went home to his heart's love.'

Drauf stimmt er an den Jagdgesang,  
Den lauten und fröhlichen Hörnerklang,  
Trarah! trarah! trarah!  
Und ging zum Herzliebchen heim.

'Sir, you make that instrument speak,'  
said the girl's father: as for her, she sat

quite still and silent, but I fancied I could see a slightly tremulous motion of her under lip.

We had the merriest of evenings in this old Gasthaus. The Fräulein's Herr Papa and the Professor were soon deep in a conversation about the Black Forest people; and the Papa, who had been living in Hüfingen, proudly declared that the whole population of the town could produce no more than half-a-dozen paupers—six poor old women, who inhabited the barn-like building bequeathed by Prince Fürstenberg. So we younger ones were left to our singing; and the Fräulein with the dark eyes and the pretty smile, sang too, in a timid way. We had Doctor Eisenbart, whose wondrous skill could make the blind to walk and the lame to see; we had Herr Oloff, who met with the Erl-king's daughter, and grew deathly-white and died; Franz

gave us that devil-may-care ditty, 'Ich gehe meinen Schlendrian ;' and Silber, being from the Rhine-country, could not help singing the Lorelei. When they asked me for an old English ballad, I felt puzzled. Have we any? Scotland is rich in old songs; Ireland has plenty; but England——? So I took refuge in the Tyrol; and sang them the song of the lover who plaited a garland of flowers, and bound his heart in it, and laid it at his sweetheart's feet.

It was a merry evening, and it was a merry morning that followed. For as we crossed the top of the mountain, and looked away down into the south, we saw the sunlight lying on the long, dark-green hills of the Black Forest, and above them, rising faintly in the far horizon, the splendid line of the Bernese Alps. The prospect of this magnificent plain, with its undulating masses of forest, its scattered villages, and its wind-

ing river-track, filled us with joy, for it said, 'Henceforth you are cut off from cities. You shall wander along by river and valley, by farmstead and village, forgetting the pallid faces and the sluggish ways of the dwellers in towns. Your hunger will grow sharp, your thirst keen, your sleep profound and sweet. Then up again, and away in the morning, through the fine cool air!'

Ye gods! how hungry one became in that rare atmosphere! Cold veal, brown bread, and red Tischwein became a feast to us; but when we fell upon a more favoured spot, where a good landlady could transform the veal into a luxurious and occult 'Falscher Vogel;' and when she produced from her cunning cupboard a bottle of Affenthaler—then we found no words to express our delight.

'Soon,' said Franz, 'we shall leave the land of the "Falscher Vogel" for the land of



the "Schnitzel." We shall see no more of the dark green forest; beeches and birches will mix with the firs. We are going further, to fare worse.'

His heart clung about the Black Forest, his native country. I think he would fain have darted away from us, and gone down by Donaueschingen, and Lenzkirch, and St Blasien, to his beloved Waldshut. He was just a trifle sad as we turned our back on the dark green woods, and entered the valley of the Danube, near where the great river rises, a small spring, in Prince Fürstenberg's garden. But his melancholy did not last long. The day was lovely. On each side of the valley, the great mountains were covered with beech, now turning red and yellow, and the sunlight burned along these successive slopes. So we wandered on; and down by Thalmühle, in the heart of the hollow, we came upon a

small inn, that had a bowling-alley in the garden.

‘Who will challenge me?’ said the Professor, with a laugh.

‘I will,’ replied Silber, who had lived in Mainz, and fancied he knew how to hit the front pin at the proper angle.

We called for some beer; the Professor threw off his coat, and took up one of the large balls. He kept his long legs rather apart, balancing himself; and then, without moving a foot, he lowered his right arm, and with a rapid sweep sent the ball spinning up the alley. There was a rumble and a crash, and the whole nine pins were lying in a confused heap.

‘Silber pays for the beer,’ remarked Franz, coolly.

And so it turned out. The Professor had not forgotten his skill since his student-days; and Silber had but a poor chance against

that powerful arm, the lithe and supple frame, and dark, sure eye. It is needless to say that Franz accompanied the performance with some music; and the landlord, who had come with the beer, hung about and stared at the musician, as the latter 'made the zither speak.'

We lingered some little while in this beautiful valley, making such sketches and studies as were thought desirable. Then on again, with Franz singing his doggerel verse—

Ich bin der Graf von Freischütz,  
Der so gern hinter 'm Ofen sitzt,  
Der Tag und Nacht marchirt,  
Hunger leidet und halb verfriert.

We left the course of the young Danube and drew southward towards the infancy of the mightier Rhine, entering upon that wide plain which, between Engen and Singen, is studded with huge volcanic peaks, rising

abruptly from the level soil. How did the old nobles build their spacious strongholds on the summit of these perpendicular peaks—the splendid Hohenhöwen, Hohentwiel, Hohenstoffeln, Hohenkrähen? Did the peasantry fly away from the neighbourhood in which such a whim had overtaken their lord, or did they meekly submit to it, and spend their toilsome days in dragging huge blocks of masonry up the sharp and rugged cones? At all events, the ruins of the castles still stand there, miracles of human labour and perseverance, far surpassing those on the Rhine. And all the country about seemed still and quiet around these memorials of ancient power. The fields that stretched for miles around the foot of the isolated peaks were as silent as the great Raubvogel that spread its wings and hung motionless in the air, spying for some fluttering bird or creeping thing in the

valley beneath. But here, also, there was peace and comfort; and we had a good laugh over the sorrows of the only man we found in the district who seemed to complain.

This was a stone-breaker—an old man, with bleared, wistful eyes, that had a strange, innocent look of surprise in them. I cannot express in words the feeling which this old man's look gave one; but it seemed somehow the half-frightened, half-pitiful glance of a boy that was busy with some appointed task, and raised his head apprehensively as his master approached. There was something very touching in this queer look, which appeared to say that the man had been doing his best all his life, and hoped he was doing right.

Of course, Franz began to talk to him; and we, who could only gather odd words and sentences, understood enough to see

that the man's whole life and interest were confined to his occupation. He spoke of the different kinds of stones as if they were sly fellows who had to be cunningly treated; and, as he spoke about a very good kind of stone, there was a half-comical grin on his face, as if he had said—

‘We can get on very well with that merry little devil of a stone. He is easy to break; he lies well on the roads. Ah! he is a good helper to us, that funny little stone.’

Then his face fell again, and he turned to his work, and said, with a sigh—

‘D’ Welt word alle Tag schlechter—s’ ist en böse Zit für üs arme Lüt, dia so alt sind.’

And then he murmured something about his poor pay and his struggle with the world. But it turned out that he made a florin a day; and Franz was immensely

tickled by the affected sorrows of a stone-breaker who could only make 10s. a week ! Some of my readers may fancy that a poor wage for a working-man ; but consider that, whereas in England the working-man's beer costs him fivepence a quart, in Germany it costs a penny ; that a penny in Germany will get a pound of bread, for which in England he pays twopence ; and that most articles required by the working-man are to be got in the latter proportion. Why, the people who chop wood in the by-streets of Munich can make a florin and a half per day, or 15s. a week.

It was towards dusk on a lovely evening that we drew near to Constance, and the long lake shone a light crimson under the sunset. Far down in the south-east a cold, blue mist had gathered along its shores and under the great, purple masses of the Tyrolese Alps, that seemed to encircle

the horizon ; but here at hand, under the white town, the still, clear waters lay with scarcely a ripple on their surface to break the splendid glow of colour. Overhead the last flush of the sunset struck along the golden bars of cloud and then died out in the pale green of the east ; while the distant mountains had a touch of red along their peaks, where the great shoulders rose out of the pale mist. So still was the lake ! And as the evening deepened, the keen colours faded out, and the white mist came up and lay all over the breadth of the water ; while the orange lights of Constance began to twinkle in the dusk, and a small steamer in the harbour ran up its coloured lamps.

We had letters awaiting us. A long epistle from Heatherleigh I shall give presently ; but I may insert here the brief note which Lena Kunzen sent her lover.



Franz was deeply disgusted by it, as he had been expecting a tender and affectionate letter. He showed it to me, with a rueful countenance. It ran in this fashion—

‘München, Tuesday.

‘Fräulein Annele von Tharau presents her compliments to Herr Franz, and hopes he is a good boy. She is quite well, and in good spirits; was out for a walk in the Englischer Garten this morning, and accidentally ran against a little Scotchman, who was dressed in the peculiar costume of his country. The little Scotchman tumbled, and cried. The Frau Mutterlein was for cuffing Annele; but she was saved from that indignity. Hopes the Herr Papa is well. Will be glad to hear from the honourable company of travellers, and thinks that a hat such as is worn by the young ladies

of Innsbruck might become Fräulein Lena well, and be a pretty present, if Herr Franz is also of that opinion. Fräulein Annele commends herself.'

## CHAPTER III.

## FATHER AND SON.

‘MY dear Ted, it is to you alone that I can write fully of all that has befallen me during the past few days. If we could only go out now, in the dusk of the evening, and have one of our old saunters round the Serpentine, with the yellow lamps burning in the grey, and courting couples regarding warily our approach! But then it rains at present, and you—you lucky dog—are down in the clear South, where night is like day, and the stars, I dare be sworn, are shining over the Bodensee. Hang you!

‘A week ago I got a letter from home. It was the first time that I had seen my father’s

handwriting, or the familiar crest, for many years.

“Come,” said I to myself, “are we all about to become sensible, and is the world getting to an end?”

‘You remember that I told you how I parted from my family when I was young. The cause of that parting I cannot help feeling as bitterly now as then ; and yet, what is the use of it? What is the use of keeping up old grudges? But there are some things a man cannot forget.

‘Pride helped to widen the breach. It is a fault that runs in our family, and a good deal of it has run my way. There is only one person I know who, in that direction, is a bigger fool than myself; and that’s you. However, to cut the matter short, my father told me that he was coming up to town in a day or two, and would call upon me. I was surprised, but contented.

‘He came up one forenoon, looking just as he used to look, but a trifle greyer. He was stiff and cold in his manner, as though he would have it known that he had not come as a suppliant. He looked with some contempt round my studio, and then fixed his eyes on the table, where some beer and tobacco stood.

“Will you put that pipe and the ashes away? The smell is abominable.”

‘I carried them into my bedroom, and put them on the mantelpiece. Then I returned. It was an affecting meeting between a father and son who had not seen each other for something like nine years, was it not? And yet, I declare to you, Ted, there seemed to hover between me and him an almost invisible shape, tender and delicate and beautiful; and I felt all the bitterness of the old, irreparable wrong rising within me. Call me what you like—unnatural, insensate;

there the feeling was, and how could I make believe to be friendly? At the very moment, too, I knew that my darling in heaven, if she could have interposed between us, would have besought our reconciliation. I felt that also. But when a man's wife has been insulted, does the husband care for the pleading of the frightened face that would fain come between?

“I am sorry to see you in such a place,” he said, looking round.

“I am very comfortable,” said I.

‘He sat down.

“This unhappy estrangement has lasted long enough between us.”

“I think it has, sir.”

“I am glad you think so. You have doubtless seen more of the world since you took that step which—which——”

“Which I don't regret having taken,” said I.

“Let us talk sensibly. Let us understand each other,” he continued. “There is no use in recalling what is over and gone. There were—hem!—faults on both sides, I dare say. You must see now that it would have been most imprudent of you to have married——”

“I thought we were to forget these things, for form’s sake ;” I said, feeling my cheek flush. “But since you have recalled them, let me tell you that I shall never forget them—that the more I see of the world, the more despicable and cowardly seems the conduct of you and yours to that poor girl. Do you fancy I did not marry her because of the underhand ways you took to prevent the marriage? God knows it was for a far different reason ; but not the less do I remember what you tried to do at that time, and the memory of it has gone on bearing heavy interest ever since.”

‘I am sorry I said this, Ted. For what was the use of saying it? I should have let the thing go; and then my father might have had the satisfaction of thinking that he and I were likely to get back to our old terms. But you who know me, know that that is impossible in this world. I hope I do not bear my father any ill-will. I should like to do anything in my power to please him. But there is no man living whom I am so anxious to avoid.

“Confound it,” he said, “let all that alone. Let us talk sensibly, like two men of the world. You are no longer a boy. You know the advantages of a good name, of a position, money, and its comforts. I am willing to make a bargain with you—to let bygones be bygones, and that you should come back home again, and take up your proper place in the house.”

‘For a moment I thought with an involun-



tary shudder of having to meet this man's face every day—recalling another face! Then I reflected that, after all, I was his son, and owed him a certain duty.

“Very well, sir,” I said; “I have no objection to go and live in your house. Of course, I have my profession, which I should like to follow——”

“As an amusement,” he interposed, hastily.

“Very well,” said I; “I am not artist-mad, as I used to be.”

‘Even as I gave in this half-adhesion to his proposal, a startling thought suggested itself—What if I should only go home to be again placed in an attitude of antagonism to all my relatives? Did my father think of this at the same moment?

“There is another subject I want to drop you a hint about, that may make your return to us more attractive. Of course you must

marry some day or other. Now it has occurred to us that there is a certain young lady, a neighbour of ours, who would prove a suitable wife—that is, of course, *of course*, if you were to become fond of each other. God forbid there should be any money-marriage between you, without affection. I am proud to say that our family does not need that method of increasing its fortune; it can stand by itself. But at the same time, the young lady is young, not bad-looking, and they say she has never even thought of anybody, while the junction of the Whitby lands with ours——”

““Oh, you mean Miss Whitby?”

• ““Exactly. I hope you have nothing to say against the girl?”

““Nothing. On the contrary, she was a charming creature, in pinafores, when I last had the pleasure of her acquaintance. And

so you make my marrying Miss Whitby the condition of my returning home?"

“How can you dream of such a thing!” he said, earnestly enough. “You do not know that the match would be agreeable to the young lady. No. I merely suggested it as a very desirable thing; and I don’t see what is to interfere with such an arrangement. The girl is a most amiable girl, according to all accounts; and the marriage would be a most sensible one. My dear boy, you are now well up in years——”

“Yes, sir; and I have acquired very fixed notions as to what it is worth one’s while to live for. Oddly enough, these notions, that have been growing upon me, are rather romantic. I was much more prosaic at twenty. Then I had a profound admiration for great wealth, and had a curious sort of belief that if I could get vast sums of money, I should be able to drink

proportionately large quantities of champagne, and so forth, and so forth. I have no longer any ambition that way. I should like to have a lot of money, on account of the security it gives one in accepting certain responsibilities ; but I have grown sceptical about its supreme power. The older I get, the more romantic I get, and the more absurd become my notions of what it is that is alone of value in life. Now, if you were to offer me the marquisate of Westminster on condition of my marrying Miss Whitby, I should find no difficulty in saying No."

“ What do you mean ? Have you anything to say against the girl ? ”

“ Nothing. But I shall prevent your wasting more time by telling you how the case stands. A good many years ago you practically turned me out of your house because I wanted to marry a girl who was poor. If I went back with you now, I

might very soon find myself in the same position again——”

“Be reasonable!” cried my father. “Or are you saying that out of revenge?”

“Certainly not,” I answered. “During these past years, I have grown so accustomed to my independent ways and narrow means that I had forgotten any wish to find myself in another condition. I was—I am—quite content, and quite ready to abide as I am. It may be those books you used to dislike, or it may be my own stupidity; but I am quite content. I have also thought of marrying; and, if I marry, I shall marry a girl who is even poorer than myself.”

“Good God! are you mad?” exclaimed my father.

“I hope not. I have not asked her to marry me—she may want to marry somebody else, for aught I know. She is an

honest woman, she has a bright, affectionate, amiable nature—just the sort of nature to sweeten a poor man's life and make it pleasant to him; and she is a good deal prettier than Miss Whitby, I dare say, though that is not of so much consequence to a middle-aged man. If she will marry me, I shall look forward with confidence to having a pleasant and intelligent companion—one who has known poverty, and can brave it—one who is not afraid of the chances of life—in short, a good, pure, honest, affectionate girl, with not a taint of fashionable ways or self-regarding notions about her.”

“But who is she—what is she?”

“Well, sir, she is at present a model.”

“I confess to you, Ted, that I had been looking forward to the surprise of this declaration as a good joke (are you surprised too, old man?) and was inclined to be highly

amused by my father's consternation. But it suddenly occurred to me that in his resentment he might say something *about her* that I should have to remember for ever; and so I hastily added—

‘ “Don’t be alarmed, sir. Nothing may come of it. In the first place, I shall not marry until I have enough money to make a small provision for my wife. I have already saved up 800*l.*—I heard that you sunk more than that on the north farm last year—and I am working hard to increase the amount. It is only, as yet, a dream of mine—a fancy that I like to speculate upon; and it has at least added a good deal of interest to my work.”

‘ “And so,” continued my father, slowly, “you actually contemplate marrying a model—a woman——”

‘ “Pardon me, sir,” I broke in, “but if you will reflect that you are talking about

her who *may* be my wife, you will see that it might be as well to say nothing hastily. Like most outsiders, you may have mistaken notions about models—I don't know ; but at all events, it is premature to trouble yourself about the matter. I suppose, too, there won't be much use, in the face of such a possibility, in our talking further about that arrangement you proposed ? ”

‘ With that, he broke forth suddenly,—

“ What ? Do you think, sir, I shall let you bring a shameless woman into my house—a woman who allows herself to——”

“ Stop ! ” I said. “ We are no longer father and son, but two men. You turned me out of your house : shall I turn you out of mine ? By heavens ! if you utter another word against that girl, you shall have to choose between the stair and the window ! ”

‘ The old story, Ted—the old story—hasty words and angry passions, to be remembered



and regretted for many a day. But who should appear in the room at this moment but Polly herself? She did not come in. She stood at the open door, her hand on the handle, her face white as death. We had been speaking sufficiently loud: she had heard everything as she came up the stairs.

‘Look back over the minute account I have written. You will see that her name was never mentioned. But in the sharp crisis, neither she nor I remembered that: we both took everything for granted. I went forward to her and said, firmly—

“Come in, Polly. It is better you should hear this out.”

‘There was that wild, pitiful, scared look on her face that she wore the evening she heard her drunken mother’s ravings. I was overwhelmed with pity for her, and also with that ghastly consciousness of power-

lessness to retrieve what is past redemption that crushes a man sometimes.

“I have heard quite enough,” she said, with a strange calmness, “and I came in to let you know that I heard it.”

“It is the second time you have been insulted in this room,” I said, “and, please Heaven, it shall be the last. The first time it was your mother, now it is my father. We have got rid of the one, now let us settle with the other, and put the matter beyond interference. It is rather odd that people should have to talk so of their parents, isn’t it? But it happens sometimes. And so——”

“And so,” said my father, “this is the young lady you mean to marry. I am sorry, miss, that you heard what was said; but—but——”

“But it was better I should,” said Polly, quite calmly; “because, you see, I can

remove this misunderstanding between you. I do not know what you want your son to do ; but I beg you to believe that I shall be no hindrance to it, for I will never be his wife."

'Then she went to the door, pale and self-possessed. I thought of stopping her ; but what would have been the good ? My father and I were left alone.

"Well, sir, are you satisfied ?" he asked, coldly.

"I shall be when you leave the house," I answered.

"Then you still persist in your determination to marry a girl whose profession must at least put her under the ban of suspicion ?"

'But the thought of the poor girl going out, with that burning sense of shame around her, into the lonely streets, recalled me to my senses. I snatched a cap, left

my father standing there, and hurried after her.

‘The arrangement you made when you left has proved a comfortable one; she has been living ever since with your mother; and the two seem very fond of each other. Of course, I could not go up there so often as I did when you were at home; but I visited the small household occasionally, and each time had another opportunity of noticing Polly’s obedient and daughter-like ways, and your mother’s affection for her. I guessed that she would go straight there on leaving Granby Street; and I hastened round to your house by the route I fancied she would take. I saw nothing of her on the way. When I got to the house I asked for your mother; and I was shown up to the parlour, which was empty. In a little while your mother came into the room, and I could see by the expression of her face

that she knew everything, and that she was much vexed and disturbed.

“Polly has told you,” I said.

“Yes,” she answered; “you cannot fancy how bitterly your father’s words have wounded her. You know how she has been schooling herself—learning things—and taking every opportunity of self-improvement. Whether she had any purpose in all this is more than I can say; but now she is cast down utterly, and wounded far more deeply than you can imagine. I have appealed to her self-respect; but she has been so deeply humiliated that she is quite prostrated. There is another thing, also. She blames herself for having opened the door, and she is covered with shame to think that she should have taken it for granted that you and your father were speaking of her.”

“But we *were* speaking of her: and she

must have known it. What is to be done to relieve the poor girl's sufferings? I know how sensitive she is; and how she must feel all this vexing nonsense. Tell her I wish to see her, only for a minute."

"If you were to see her now, in her present mood, you would make the thing irrevocable," said your mother. "It may be so as it is."

"What do you mean?"

"I know Polly very well—better than you do. Under her happy and good-natured ways, there lies a firm will; and if she were to resolve at this moment that she will never see you again, she would keep her word. Be advised: leave her to herself. I will do what I can to help you, that is if you think you will be happier in marrying her than in becoming a rich man."

'Your mother said this with a peculiar smile, Ted, that made her face look lovely,

and yet a trifle sad. Does she know that you told me her story?

“If you marry her,” she added, gravely and kindly, “you will get a true wife, tender-hearted and honest, whom you will be always able to trust, who will be the same to you in good or in bad circumstances. And you will get a wife who will look up to you, and give you her love as the only thing she can offer you. I must not advise you to do it, Mr. Heatherleigh. There may be great inducements on the other side; and there are people who, in your position, would be ruined by such a marriage. But you are no longer a very young man. You know what you have to expect in life. You must make your choice.”

“My choice is made—was made long ago; and I shall rely upon your aid,” I said, very gratefully.

‘When I got out into the open air, Ted, it

seemed to have been all a mistake or a dream. I asked myself if it was possible that people should permit themselves to be so deeply vexed—should, perhaps, alter all their plans in life—in consequence of half-a-dozen words? Why, all the circumstances of the world were just as they were an hour before. London had got a little nearer its dinner-time, that was all. Yet these half-dozen impalpable words had knocked our lives completely off their ordinary axes; and were likely to interfere with the future in a very remarkable fashion. I fancied if I could have got hold of Polly, and shown her the absurdity of vexing herself about two or three insignificant words, resolvable into their original letters, she would have been willing to send them into this alphabetic chaos, and pay them no further attention. These words had altered neither her, nor me, nor anything: why heed them?



They had not even altered to the extent of an apple the stall of that old woman at the corner to whom you gave the five shillings when you sold your picture. Yet with women words are powerful.

‘Nor have I been able to see her since. She was to have given me some sittings for a picture I have just begun, yet she has never made her appearance. So far as I can learn she has sat to nobody since that unlucky forenoon. I can’t get a glimpse of her. I have called twice to see your mother ; and, on both occasions, Polly, who was in the house, declined coming down.

‘You will say this is very absurd, and so it is. But I am getting to be somewhat uneasy, especially as your mother looks rather grave over the matter. She says Polly’s deep hurt is far from being healed, and that the girl says, quite calmly and fixedly, that, whatever my resolutions may be as regards

my father and myself, nothing will interfere with her determination. Your mother, I suppose, has been pleading my cause, and Polly only replies—

“I have still some self-respect left. It is not necessary that I should marry anybody, least of all into a family where I should be despised.”

‘If she would only let me see her for a few minutes, I think I could reason her out of this deplorable resolution. Where is *my* family, I should like to know? In the meanwhile the perplexity of the position harasses me. I cannot work, and I cannot remain idle; I cannot even read. I have tried to cut my anxiety to pieces by analysis, but I have no sooner got to the end of some chapter on the influence of the mental emotions on the vital functions, than I fling the confounded book aside, and wonder whether I shall ever get to see Polly. Even

Marcus Aurelius, whom I used to look upon as a charm against all the evils of life, goads me into fury. Many a time have I looked from that calm and lofty pinnacle of philosophy, whence all human ills become beautiful objects of contemplation, but then they were the ills of other people that I was contemplating. "All that is from the gods is full of providence," says the emperor, but it may also be full of pain.

‘One thing I have resolved upon. If ever I get the chance, I shall marry Polly out of hand, and thereafter there will be no question of divided interests. Let me know what you think of the whole matter.

‘I have selfishly reserved this long letter for my own affairs, and I can only add a line to say with what anxiety your friends here look forward to your next work. Tell me how your studies, so far, have moulded your intentions. Your sympathies are wholly

northern, I think;—I shall never forget your scornful and unfair contrast between the Nibelungen-Lied and the writings of poor Chateaubriand. You are always unjust to France and the French, while your strong natural bent for northern simplicity, naturalness, and rough untrained emotions leads you to overrate what is crude in art. Munich, however, is a city of eclecticism, and you will probably have your sympathies widened. When you get back to Munich, I wish you would send me a minute description of whatever of Wohlgemuth's work you can find. I am curious, and a little sceptical, about Dürer's obligations to him.

‘Farewell! I will address a brief note to you at Innsbruck.’

So here was the story out at last. I was not much surprised by Heatherleigh's announcement. It was easy to guess that

something very important must have occurred to effect such a complete change in his notions and habits as he had recently exhibited. The Heatherleigh of this later period was very unlike, in many things, the easy-going, indolent Heatherleigh of other years, who used to lounge about in his roughly epicurean fashion; at times sharply interrupting his Bohemian life by fits of splendour and extravagance. It was easy to guess that Heatherleigh meant to do something with the money which he was now so industriously hoarding; for the notion of Heatherleigh hoarding money for his own use or satisfaction was too preposterous to be entertained for a moment.

Nor could there be much doubt about the way in which Polly would otherwise have regarded his proposal. I fancied she had read his secret, and was as busily, though with far greater shyness and closeness, pre-

paring for the marriage, as he himself. I saw in these various efforts at self-improvement she was so laboriously making, so many honest and praiseworthy efforts to make herself more worthy of the man whom she loved. My mother took care never to hint anything of the kind. She praised Polly's industry, and to us, when Polly was absent, she was never tired of eulogising the girl's sweetness of temper, and general brightness and cleverness.

‘She is one in a thousand,’ she used to say. ‘Who could have expected to find a girl brought up all her life in London so winning in her fearless, simple ways? She has the cleverness of the town, and the natural frankness and good-nature of the country, and whoever marries her will marry a good, honest woman.’

It did seem hard that these two, so cunningly preparing for a long, life partner-

ship—laying in stores, as it were, wherewith to furnish their nest when the happy spring-time came—should thus be separated. But I knew Polly's extreme sensitiveness, and her indomitable firmness, and I was a good deal less surprised than apprehensive, in reading Heatherleigh's story of what had happened.

Her position was by far the more painful of the two. I could imagine the poor girl brooding over the cruel wound that had been dealt to her self-respect, and resolving that there was but one way in which she could clear herself in her own eyes. It was a cruel method of repelling an unjust accusation, whichever way she resolved. I knew that she must be suffering with all the keenness of pain that accompanies a deeply sensitive nature; and when I went upstairs to bed that night, and looked out and saw, above the misty waters of the

Constance lake, the far constellations of the northern heavens, I fancied these cold stars were shining down upon the huddled darkness of London, and I knew that they saw few more unhappy faces there than the pleasant one that Heatherleigh loved.



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## CHAPTER IV.

## THE SONG OF WÖLUNDUR.

‘You see,’ remarked the Professor, ‘it is our only German lake; and therefore we are very proud of it. And is it not a noble lake?’

He might well say so. We were standing on a little height outside the town—the huddled white houses, spires, and boats of Constance on our right—and there before us lay the long lake, an intense pale blue, so clear and still that the square-sailed little boats, which caught the sunlight on their yellow canvas, seemed to hang in mid-air. Out into this blue ran wooded promontories; the green bays between, with their occa-

sional villa, being faintly mirrored in the smooth water. And then, far beyond the jutting points of Romanshorn and Friedrichshafen, overlooking the lake, and yet appearing strangely distant in the white haze of the morning sunlight, the grand range of the Vorarlberg mountains, with the jagged Kurfürsten and the snow-flecked Sentis down in the south.

We remained in the neighbourhood of Constance for three days, filling our portfolios with sketches. Certainly there was no lack of material; for the autumn was now wearing on, and the mists that hung about the lake and the mountains in the morning, or gathered over in the evening, produced a constant series of new effects. Vogl was a lover of mist. He used to describe the strange white clouds that sometimes hang over the dark firs of the Black Forest, even when the morning sunlight

is lying yellow on the valleys, and falling here and there into the wet woods. He used to describe the wonderful stillness of the forest under this white canopy, that just touches the tops of the dark trees, leaving a sort of twilight underneath, where the air is moist and laden with resinous odours—how you go in among the moss and brackens that are heavy with dew, expecting at every foot-fall to startle a wild-eyed roe ; and how the clouds slowly gather themselves together and draw upwards to the hill-tops, as if they were covering the stealthy flight of Diana, when she has left Endymion, ‘pale with her last kiss,’ to waken in the cold morning freshness.

‘I paid Lena out for her impudence,’ said Vogl to me privately, as we sailed down the lake to Bregenz.

‘How?’

‘I wrote her a short note in the broadest

Black-Forest dialect, and she will puzzle over it for days. It is even worse when written than when spoken. What would you make of this, for example?'

He put a bit of paper on his zither-case, resting it on the paddle-box, and wrote—  
'Ech woas es nit, wenn i ka Zagarta kuma, darno will der's saga, wegem Schoppa biatza, i kinnt jetzt cho kuma, aber i ha nit der Wiel, du häschmer au scho en mänga G'falle than.' \*

'It is a very good conundrum,' I said, 'but I give it up. And I don't envy you when you come to read the answer that Lena will send you.'

'Nothing keeps Lena a quiet and good

\* Which, in ordinary German, would be something like this—'Ich weiss es nicht; wenn ich kann auf Besuch kommen, dann will ich dir's sagen, wegen dem Kittel flicken. Ich könnte jetzt schon kommen, aber ich habe keine Zeit: du hast mir auch schon manchen Gefallen gethan.'

little girl like the zither. So soon as she gets away from the charm of it, she is wild, impudent, impracticable. But she will make a good little wife, will Lenele, when we grow old enough to marry.'

'What does the Herr Professor say about it?'

'He does not care. I suppose he does not know that we are sweethearts. Yet he knows that she writes to me, and I to her; and that we go out together always.'

'And the Frau Mamma?'

'Oh, she is a good, homely woman. She has friends in Waldshut, and they know that my father is pretty well off. The Mutterlein will make no objection.'

'And the Fräulein Caroline herself?'

'I am puzzled,' said Franz, with a comic look of bewilderment. 'Lena is a Will-o'-the-wisp. I can't catch her. She won't talk seriously. But being sweethearts with

her is very pleasant, and if she won't marry me, I can't help it. If she marries anybody else, I must take to singing all the heart-broken songs; but I shan't break my own heart for all that. I was not made for it, *lieber Freund*,' he added gaily; 'love affairs will never interfere with my liking for "Falscher Vogel," stewed apples, and red wine.'

'Yet you could support the character of the heart-broken lover so well—you could fly away from the sound of the mill-wheel and become a minstrel, and wander up and down the world, singing from house to house.'

'Ah,' said he, 'when I hear the song of the broken ring, I begin to fancy there is some truth in all that business of love and despair.'

I looked at the zither-case; I knew he could not help turning his hand to it. Only speak of songs, and Franz mechani-

cally began to undo the leather strap, and pull out the zither, and touch the strings. This 'time he played the pretty Tyrolese waltz that Donizetti has introduced into 'La Figlia del Reggimento,' and then the music somehow led him into the old Tyrolese song that I have already mentioned—

Herzig's Schatzerl, lass dich Herzen,  
Ich vergehe vor Liebes-schmerzen,  
Und du weisst es ja zu wohl  
Dass ich dich ewig lieben soll !

He sung it almost to himself; and the simple pathetic melody was mingled with the sound of the paddle-wheels, as we churned our way through the blue waters down to Bregenz.

All during this beautiful time, I was haunted in a way that is scarcely expressible in words, by the imagined presence of Hester Burnham. Quite in spite of myself, I kept continually picturing her as she

would appear if some miracle were to bring her into the same boat or the same hotel. Then would follow long imaginary talks with her ; and visions of the wonder of her eyes, and the delight of her face, as something especially beautiful came in our way. I got to look at everything just as if she were by my side ; and I judged of it as she would be likely to judge of it. Now, when I look back upon this journey, it seems as if the whole of it were imbued with her presence. I cannot think of that steamboat on the lake, without seeming to see there a small figure, dressed in black, with a certain graceful and queenly carriage about it, with a strange honesty and tenderness in the eyes, and a calm, wistful beauty in the dark clear face. Indeed, so deep-rooted had this habit become, that I should not have been in the least surprised had I in reality encountered her. So far as the influence of



her presence was concerned, she was actually there, with me, wherever I went. I began to forget that it could only be by a sort of miracle that we should meet. I came downstairs in the morning, half expecting to hear her voice at the breakfast table; and then I used to feel a kind of accepted disappointment in seeing that the room was empty. When I saw at any distance a girlish figure dressed something like an English lady, it was with a secret hope that I drew nearer. Why was it so impossible we should meet? Why should she not come this way for her autumn tour; and then, some morning, as I go down and into the large bare apartment, with its long table and rows of cups and napkins, lo! standing at the window, with her face half-hidden in the light, the lady of many dreams!

What shall I do? Why, you know, we

are in Germany now ! England and its coldness, its harsh ways and cruel thoughts, are gone from us. This is the home of the old romances ; and the breath of this land tells you even now that a woman's love is something better than money and better worth striving for. I go forward to her. I say, ' Hester, I dared not tell you in England that I loved you : here, in Germany, I must tell you. Will you give me your love in return for mine ? Will you be my wife, and let us go away together, our backs upon England, into the green valleys of the Tyrol ? We are free here ; and I think we love each other very dearly.' I can see a look of heaven in her eyes. She puts her hand upon mine, light as the touch of a rose-leaf, and says, with that strange smile of hers : ' We do love each other : why should we not always be together ? '

Ach, Gott ! These were the pictures that

hovered before my eyes during all this journey. Strange, too, that in these day-dreams she always appeared alone. I never granted for a moment the presence of any one else. And doubtless the small girlish figure seemed rather solitary at this time—the only mistress of the great house at Burnham, with no near relations, with few companions, and leading all by herself a quiet country life, attending to her duties, with apparently no wish to alter the current of her existence. That small lady was a striking figure to me; and the great woods of Burnham, and the loneliness of the Burnham valley made her individuality, her solitariness, all the more vivid and distinct.

My constant thought was, ‘If I could only meet her here, apart from all the old associations that separated us in England, I would venture everything upon one effort to win her. Differences of social position may be

something in the west of London ; but they are nothing in front of the lonely mountains of the Vorarlberg, or even at the common breakfast-table of a remote Tyrolese inn.

Nor was there any bitterness in the thought that these dreams were delusions. In England they would have been very bitter—the aspirations after a happiness too clearly impossible. But here in Germany I had grown bold. It was no longer impossible—this beautiful, though distant dream, that ringed the vague future with a band of burnished gold. Delusive, doubtless, in the meantime ; but who could tell what the coming years might bring forth ? And as I looked forward to them in this spirit—a spirit that had grown strong and hopeful with much joyous living—I was not curious to ask which of the pale years should be singled out from its fellows to be smitten with the radiance of the dawn. It would

come in good time; and it always lay ahead.

That evening I heard, but indirectly, from England; the Professor having had some letters forwarded from Munich, among them one from Mr. Webb. We were now in the brisk little town of Bregenz, which lies at the southern end of the lake, under the shadow of the rocky and wooded hills above; and we had caught our first glimpse of the picturesque costume of the Tyrol. As we walked along to the inn, we overtook a smart, dark-faced little woman, who was slowly driving home her cows—those beautiful little animals, with large mild eyes, and pretty dun-grey hides, which one meets everywhere among the Tyrolese valleys.

‘What sort of skin is that hat made of?’ I asked, looking at a large, bee-hive-looking thing she wore, which had a shining, deep-brown colour, like the skin of a bear.

‘ Shall I ask her ? ’ said Franz, gaily.

‘ Yes.’

‘ Fräulein,’ he said, going up to her and gallantly taking off his hat, ‘ a Mr. Englishman wants to know what sort of skin your pretty hat is made of.’

The little woman turned upon him, sharp as a needle.

‘ Not of an ass’s skin, so you’ve no concern with it,’ she said, with a look of courageous anger.

Silber burst into a loud guffaw ; but Franz was not much taken aback.

‘ It was a compliment, Fräulein, to your fine wool ; and you shouldn’t be so snappish with strangers.’

‘ You shouldn’t be so ready with your jokes, Mr. Englishman.’

‘ Lieber Himmel ! she takes me for an Englishman ! ’ said Franz. ‘ Why ? I haven’t offered her money for a cup of

water ; nor has she seen me laughing at the costume of a priest or a nun.'

But the small Tyrolese woman went away in high dudgeon ; and doubtless treasures a grudge against the English nation until this day.

In the evening, after dinner, when we had gathered round the fire, the Professor pulled Mr. Webb's letter out of his pocket, and said slily—

'Gentlemen, it is always good, when one of our small company earns praises, that the rest should know it. I propose to translate into German for you a letter I have received from an English gentleman, respecting a picture that has been done by one of us, and that has made a stir even in so unimpressible a country as England.'

The letter was about Kilmeny, and need not be further noticed here. Neither the Professor nor my fellow-students had heard

of this picture; and I had to answer many questions about it. Franz was too curious about the lady of whom Mr. Webb incidentally spoke, as having suggested the face; and there was nothing for it but to tell Franz to be less curious. So he only murmured under his breath—

‘Die Dame, die ich liebe, nenn’ ich nicht,’

and made a wry face at Silber, who was puffing his large student’s pipe, and thoughtfully passing his fingers through his long yellow hair.

‘My friend in England,’ continued the Professor, ‘sends you very good wishes, and hopes you will let him know what you mean to paint next, when our present trip is over. Have you thought of a subject?’

‘Yes.’

‘Then tell us about it.’

‘With pleasure, if it is of the least



interest to you. It is merely the story of Wölundur—the *Völundarkvidha*.'

'My remembrance of these old sagas is very faint now,' said the Professor. 'Pray tell us the story.'

'Yes,' said Silber, 'tell us the story altogether, for I don't know one of them.'

'Very well,' said I; 'but I cannot vouch for the accuracy of my memory.'

So I told them the story, in this wise :—

'There were three brothers, sons of the King of Finland, named Slagfidr, Egil, and Wölundur. They went away over the ice, on a hunting expedition, and they came to Wolfsthal, and there they built houses. Near to Wolfsthal is the Wolfs-see, and early one morning they found near the borders of the lake three maidens, who were spinning flax. Two were the daughters of King Lödwer; but the third, who was called Alhwit (All-white), was the

daughter of Kiar von Walland. The three brothers took the three maidens home with them ; Slagfidr and Egil marrying the king's daughters, while the maiden Alhwit became the wife of Wölundur.

‘ Now Wölundur had more knowledge of all the arts than any other man ; and he made many beautiful gold bracelets, and hung them up in his house. But after they had spent seven winters together, the three sisters fled away “ in search of their fate ; ” and, while Slagfidr and Egil went to seek their wives, Wölundur remained at home, fashioning his cunning bracelets and rings, and waiting for his young wife to come back to him.

‘ All this became known to Nidudr, the King of Sweden ; and when he heard that Wölundur lived alone in the Wolfsthal, he took some men with him and went there by night, and bound Wölundur while he

was asleep, and stole his sword and a beautiful gold ring. When Wölundur missed the ring, he thought that Alhwit had taken it with her. The sword King Nidudr kept to himself, and the ring he gave to his brown-lovely (*brauensöhne*) daughter Bödwild.

‘But the queen said, “When he sees the sword and the ring, Wölundur’s mouth will water, and his eyes will burn.”’

Wild glühn die Augen  
Dem gleissenden Wurm.

‘And she bade her husband go and cut the sinews of the hero’s knees, and place him in an island, so that he might not wreak vengeance upon them. And this was done; and the king put him into a smithy, where he was kept making jewels and treasures for the royal household. Then Wölundur saw that the king wore the sword that had belonged to him, and he saw that Bödwild wore the red gold ring of his beloved

Alhwit; and he swore to be revenged, for he fancied they had murdered his young wife.

‘The king’s sons, two boys, came playing near the smithy, and Wölundur seized upon them, and hewed their heads off. Then the maiden Bödwild came, and she brought the red ring of Wölundur’s beloved, that he might mend it. Then he said he would mend it, and the king’s daughter sat down in a chair, and he cunningly gave her mead to drink, so that she slept.

“Wohl mir,” sprach Wölundur,  
“Wär’ ich auf den Sehnen,  
Die mir Nidudurs  
Männer nahmen.”

‘Bödwild went home, weeping bitterly over the fierce wrong that had been done to her; but Wölundur went into the open air and laughed aloud. And the king came to him, and asked where were his two boys. “Swear to me first,” says Wölundur, “that

you have not killed my bride." Wölundur tells the king that he has cut his sons' heads off; that he has rimmed the skulls with silver for a present to the king; that he has changed the eyes into jewels for the false wife of the king; that he has made of the teeth breast-jewels for the king's daughter. But the heaviest blow of his vengeance is to come; for the king bids them bring his brown-lovely, ring-encrusted daughter, and demands of her if she sat an hour with Wölundur in the island. And Bödwild answers very sorrowfully—

“Wahr ist das, Nidudur,  
Was man dir sagte :  
Ich sass mit Wölundur  
Zusammen im Holm  
Hätte nie sein sollen !”

‘I remember the story,’ said the Professor. ‘It is a terrible one. And what scene do you propose to take?’

‘That of the island-smithy, with the

maimed hero, dark and revengeful, looking at his wife's ring, which the king's daughter brings to him.'

'It is a grand position,' said Franz; 'and I would have the king's daughter looking young and beautiful, and innocent of the crime.'

'Then people will ask why she should suffer for the wickedness of her father and mother,' said Silber.

'Let them ask!' said Franz. 'We don't say who is right, and who is wrong. We tell the story of old and hard times, in which a man's family was a part of his wealth, and you robbed him that way as soon as any other, if you wanted to be revenged.'

'That is very well said—very good,' remarked the Professor. 'You tell the story, and let the audience sympathise with whom it pleases. The most prominent figure of a

picture or a drama is not necessarily the hero. I think the subject is a good one, if treated carefully. But it must be neither sentimental nor melodramatic. What do you say, Franz—shall we make the subject a class-subject, and give Herr Edward the benefit of all our suggestions?'

'Capital!' said Franz. 'And then, after we have done what we can for him in the way of helping the composition, we must get the proper models for him. I have them in my eye just now.'

'Who are they?'

'Why, our good friend Silber will stand for Wölundur, and one might hope to gain the kind assistance of Fräulein Riedel——'

'I beg you will not mention Fräulein Riedel's name,' said Silber, with a sudden and angry flush.

'No offence,' said Franz, with a provoking

calmness ; ‘I was not aware you were so much interested in the lady.’

‘I am not interested.’

‘Who is the Fräulein Riedel?’ asked the Professor, apparently to smooth the matter down.

‘Herr Professor,’ observed Franz, ‘the Fräulein Riedel is—a lady. I hope one may be permitted to say so, even in the presence of my good friend Silber.’

The Professor laughed heartily, and the matter dropped. This Fräulein Riedel was a young lady who played and sang in the burlesques and operettas of the Volks-Theater in Munich—a theatre which the Professor was not likely to visit. Silber maintained hotly that many a worse singer and actress appeared as *prima donna* in the Hof-Theater; and that some day the Fräulein would sing there too.

‘She knows the whole of the part of



Rezia in "Oberon" he used to say proudly; 'for I have been permitted to hear her sing it; and I doubt not she is equally familiar with the rest of your *grand* operas. But I believe you only affect to despise Offenbach, because he is new, and French.'

There was really some romance in connection with this affair. Silber had fallen desperately in love with the Fräulein when he first saw her, in some small town near the Rhine, play the heroine of our English farce 'The Rough Diamond,' which Alexander Bergen has translated. 'Ein ungeschliffener Diamant' was too much for the young student, who never forgot 'Margaretha von Immergrün's' black eyes and hair. Three years passed, and he had almost forgotten Fräulein Riedel, when whom should he see, walking along the Karl's Platz, in Munich, but the same girl

who had struck his fancy as the young Baroness von Immergrün. He followed her—all the way to the Volks-Theater, where he saw her enter. He looked at the bill—Fräulein Riedel was announced to appear in an operetta that evening. Silber went, and renewed his thrall. By-and-by he managed to get acquainted with her ; and he was beside himself with joy when she allowed him to present her with a bracelet. One day he ventured to propose a walk, and she kindly consented. They crossed the Maximilien-bridge and passed along the leafy avenues of the ‘new pleasure grounds’ on the banks of the Isar ; then they went down by Brunnthal, and again crossed the river by the wooden bridge which abuts on the Tivoli gardens. Now, as it happened, Franz and I, who had been dragged by Silber many times to the theatre to look at Fräulein Riedel, happened to be sitting under the

Tivoli trees, with some beer on the small table before us.

‘Du Himmel!’ exclaimed Franz, ‘there is Silber, with his Schätzchen of the Volks-Theater!’

And so it was. Silber saw us, gave us a grave bow, and passed sedately on. How proud he looked! It was from this time that he cultivated more and more the student-appearance—wearing his fair hair long and smooth, sporting blue caps with prodigious gold tassels, smoking preposterous pipes, talking metaphysics, of which he did not even know the terminology, and drinking beer in quantities that disagreed with him.

‘Silber is a vast and uncommon humbug,’ Franz used to say; ‘but that little girl with the black eyes believes in him.’

I think she was quite a respectable little woman, and did her best to keep him from

drinking useless quantities of beer—a feat he never sought to perform, except that he might boast of it to her. She was evidently impressed by his assuming the character of the careless, happy, brave, and withal loveable student who figures on the stage. Why could she, familiar with acting, not see that this stupendous ass was only acting? That was always a mystery to Franz and me; for we did not believe that the Fräulein was actually in love with him.

‘How many glasses of beer have you drunk, Silber?’ Franz used to ask.

‘Five.’

‘Is that all?’

‘Yes.’

‘Fräulein Riedel will despise you.’

‘Himmel’s Sacrament!’ Silber would growl, as much as to say, ‘Another word and I challenge you, *ohne Mühtzen, ohne Secundanten.*’

‘I will make you a proposal.’

‘Well?’

Pay for three more glasses of beer. I drink them. Then you go to Fräulein Riedel, and say “Admire me : I have drunk eight glasses of beer!”

With which Silber used to become furious, and declare that if we were in Heidelberg, Franz would not be so bold.

I could forgive Silber everything except his singing. Of course, he fancied that he ought to sing the Burschen-Lieder, to support the character; and he used to sing the jovial and jolly student-songs with an affected swagger which was at once ludicrous and irritating. One could not help being amused by Silber’s peculiar method of leering at the humorous passages, nor vexed to hear the fine and manly songs burlesqued by this poor, conceited wind-bag. Kotzebue’s Bundeslied was one of his

favourites, as was also the universal 'Gaudeamus igitur,' which Franz used to alter in this way—

Gaudeamus igitur,  
Juvenes dum sumus,  
Post jucundam juventutem,  
Per molestam senectutem,  
Nos habebit conjux.

A sorer trial, however, was Silber at love-songs; for his voice had an odd habit of contradicting the theatrical expression of rapture he endeavoured to throw into his face. With great good-humour, Franz used to play accompaniments whenever Silber would sing; and it was certainly a queer conjunction to hear the sensitive, thrilling, beautiful music of the zither hovering around and about poor Silber's quavering voice. Silber had a notion of learning to play the zither himself; but seemed not to be quite sure whether it would befit the

character he ordinarily assumed. Yet, with all his weaknesses and affectations, the lad had some good points about him, or how could that black-eyed little actress have smiled upon his uncouthness?

## CHAPTER V.

## NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

WAS it love, or was it the keen air of the Tyrol, that awoke all those wild enthusiasms which now, as I look back, I can see clustering around our happy journey through the mountain land?

‘Why,’ I said to myself, ‘should I return to these old dead times for a story? Why not take our modern life, which is as full of love and tragic misery as any time before it, and seize the hearts of men with some noble tale of suffering, or courage, or heroism? And what is the message which I should take home to my countrymen from this rarer atmosphere, in which the finer aspirations of



human nature flourish—what but that love is better than wealth, and a true heart of more value than big estates?’

The message was not nearly so startling as I fancied. Many a man has preached it without being much attended to; many a man has found out its truth when, after spending a life-time in growing rich, he looks back, and sees in the past a young face full of love and the pain of parting, and wonders whether less money and more of the love that he threw away might not have made his life happier.

‘Why are you always so silent in the morning?’ asked Franz, as we left Bregenz. ‘You are visited by grand flashes of silence, in which you seem to sink into your breeches-pockets. You are practically dead. You see nothing and hear nothing, unless you are listening inside your brain to some music that a girl sang to you in England. Is that true?’

‘Yes; I can hear her singing sometimes,’  
I said.

We had turned our back on the lake that was half hidden under the white thick mist, and were now skirting the base of the rocky and wooded mountains that encircle the Tyrol, preparatory to our crossing the giant chain of the Arlberg. The busy Tyrolese were already abroad in their fields and meadows, where the small, meek, large-eyed cattle browsed. As we ascended, the air became rarer, the sun broke through the mist, and lit up for us the immense range of the Appenzeller Alps, that were here and there dusted with snow.

‘What is the colour of her eyes?’ said Franz, insidiously.

‘They are like the sea,’ I said—‘of all colours, in different moods. But they are generally dark, and clear, and calm.’

Franz unsuccessfully endeavoured to push his enquiries further.

‘Tell me,’ he said, ‘what she is like altogether, and I will write a song about her in Tyrolese?’

‘A song has been written about her already.’

‘By whom?’

‘Schiller. She is the beautiful and wonderful maiden who came down into the valley, no one knew whence.’

‘You are, then, in love with a phantom?’

‘Yes, Franz; I am indeed in love with a phantom.’

I could almost have believed then that Hester Burnham had come down the valley before us, even as Schiller’s maiden did; for by reason of constantly looking at things, and fancying what she would think of them, I came to regard them as having already acquired from her some touch of fascination.

Would it ever happen that I should bring her this very route? Should we hire a carriage at Bregenz, drive out from the brisk little town, along the level road through Dornbirn, with its quaint houses, and Hohenembs with its Jewish-featured people—on to Feldkirch and the lovely valley of the Ill—past Bludenz, with the mountains getting higher, and the valley more rugged—then down the Klosterthal, to rest in the evening in the old inn at Dalaas, with a warm and well-lit room, and casements opening to show us the moonlight shimmering along the pale white glaciers of the mountains under which the little village lies? Would it ever be my great joy to wrap up the little figure cosily in her carriage, and see that she was snug and warm as we drove through the cold mountain-air? Should I be able to look in her eyes as I drew the shawl tighter under the small chin, to keep

the white little neck comfortable, and close, and safe? Fancy going through this beautiful country—away from towns, and strangers, and the formal obligations of society; her only duty being to look herself and charm the very air around her, mine but to wait upon my dainty little queen and beg the mountain-wind to be gentle with her hair. Of these sweet dreams the deadliest poison of misery is made.

The Tyrol was for me henceforth and for ever saturated with memories and thoughts and suggestions of Hester Burnham. The reader, who may have gone through this charming country, and enjoyed its simple ways, its homely meals, its clear air, and its splendid lines of snow-hills, will perhaps scarcely understand how a small lady, secreted among the leaves of Buckinghamshire, could have changed the character of a whole country, and permeated its gigantic

mountains, its green fields, its grey, rushing rivers, its very sunshine, with the subtle influence of her presence. The sunshine was different there. A month later, dwelling among the dull white houses of Munich, I used to wonder if there was any sunshine like the sunshine of the Tyrol, and whether she and I might ever see it together.

As ill-luck would have it, there was no sunshine for the Professor's party in crossing the Arlberg. On the contrary we found our way to the summit of the mountain in dense clouds of mist and rain, that concealed from us the precipices under our feet, and prevented our looking either to the right hand or to the left. It had been raining all night, too ; and the mountain torrents, swollen and muddy, dashed down the channels they had cleared for themselves, with a noise that was all the more impressive that we could only now and again catch glimpses of the masses

of foaming, tumbling grey water. Sometimes the mist became so thick that we could just see the posts stuck along the edge of the road, to prevent carriages from going over ; while, on the other hand, there was a faint green hue appearing through the vapour, which we took to be the wet side of the hill glimmering behind the fog.

There was only one waterproof coat amongst us, and that we voted over to the Professor. So we walked on.

‘I take it,’ observed the Professor, drawing up his spare figure, seemingly in defiance of the rain that dashed about his face and trickled down his nose—‘I take it that all imaginative art has sprung from the mountain districts of the world—that the human mind has been awakened to the conception of music, poetry, and painting by the solitude of mountains. Yet you will find that the men who have caught the

imaginative width and power of the hills into their nature have gone down into the plains—into the towns and cities, perhaps—to seek the calm of artistic expression. All the great artists of Italy have been born beneath the spell of the Apennines ; and then they have gone into Florence, or Rome, or Milan, as the case may be, and they have put the free inspiration of the hills into their work——’

‘ But, Herr Professor, Michael Angelo was not born among the mountains, and he had the most powerful imagination of them all,’ objected Franz, who was at this moment a wretched spectacle.

‘ Learn, sir,’ said the Professor, ‘ never to destroy a theory with a fact. Yet, tell me, where was Michael Angelo born ? ’

‘ At Arezzo,’ replied Silber, like a good boy.

‘ And Arezzo,’ continued the Professor,



‘if not among the hills, is only a few miles off. It is no further from the great backbone of the Apennines than is Urbino, on the other side, where Raphael grew up under their shadow. Why, you ought to be able to tell, without knowing where he was born, that Michael Angelo was no dweller in the plains. Look at his “Moses”—there is the majesty of a great mountain in that figure—that is the only thing by which you can characterise the force and the grandeur of it.’

‘I know,’ said Franz, ruefully, as he shook his dripping sleeves, ‘that there isn’t much in a day like this to stir one’s imagination—unless it is the prospect of a fire and some cognac at the end of the journey.’

‘It is this wild contrast of atmospheric conditions,’ continued the Professor, ‘that impresses one who is brought up among the hills with the strong life and intensity of

nature. There is no mild sameness always around him. There are great forces at work, a constant motion, and the vivid, startling presentation of change. Look around you just now. It is a world of eddying mist and fog, with pitiless rain, and the sound of hurrying waters sweeping down below us, unseen. But suppose a great wind were to arise right ahead, and come blowing along the mountain-tops, and clear away the fog and the rain—suppose, when we were in dejection and despair, this great wind were to come, and all at once we saw before us the valley glittering with rain-drops in the sun, the warm, gleaming light all around us, and the wonderful, intense blue overhead, should we not have the power and the beauty of the sunlight impressed upon us as it never was before? Then the simple peasant, reaching up his hands to the warmth and the sun, and

thinking that heaven has suddenly come near, must needs sing aloud, as if he were a bird, to the blue sky ; and the man who has the heart of a painter in him, is amazed by the intensity of the colours of the world around him, and forgets the vision never ! He will not try to reproduce this wonder of light—he may despair of his colours : but all these intense, vivid impressions of change, and majesty, and calm, and beauty that he receives among the hills remain a power within him ; and when, in his studio, down in some great town, he tries to picture to himself the grandeur of a heroic figure or the purity and sweetness of a woman's face, his memory of the wonders of the mountains will lend him his ideal. Did you ever, any of you, see Pordenone's "Santa Giustina," which is in the Belvedere at Vienna ? I tell you that to look once at that woman's face—to get a glimpse of its surpassing and

gracious sweetness, its perfect serenity and repose—it were worth while to walk from here to the Kaiser-Stadt with bare feet ! ’

The Professor was very gruff and silent for some time thereafter. He had been surprised into an enthusiasm, and there was nothing he more disliked. His singular bashfulness invariably produced a strong reaction ; and when once he had recovered possession of himself, I fancy he used to brood over what he had been saying, and look upon himself as having played the fool. He used to blush like a girl, too, after these outbursts ; but on this occasion, he was safe from scrutiny by reason of the tall collar of the waterproof-coat.

‘ I know,’ said Franz, ‘ that all our fine old melodies have come to us from the hills—from the Tyrol, from the Thüringer Wald, from the Riesengebirge, and the Saxon Highlands.’

‘You ought to sing one now, or we shall all be getting down-hearted,’ said Silber. ‘We don’t know how many miles it is yet to Landeck, and the rain will not cease to-day.’

‘But it will cease to-morrow, or some other morrow,’ said Franz gaily. ‘You ought to look forward to the snug inn at Landeck — the warm stoves, a schnitzel, wine, a pipe, and sleep—all of which luxuries lie ahead. I have the picture before me. A large room, long tables, one of them covered with a white cloth, a green stove, very warm, two candles, some matches——’

‘A zither,’ I added.

‘And a picture of the patron saint of brewers, the king Cambrinus — a jolly person in blue and red robes, holding a foaming jug of beer in his hand, and honoured by these highly ingenious lines—

Cambrinus in Flandern und Brabant,  
Ein König über Leut' und Land,  
Aus Malz und Hopfen hat gelehrt  
Zu brauen Bier gar lobenswerth,  
Drum ist er in der Brauen Orden  
Ihr oberster Patron geworden ;  
Wo gibt's ein ander Handwerk mehr,  
Das sich kann rühmen solcher Ehr ?

‘ It is not in the Tyrol, Mr. Frank,’ said the Professor, ‘ that you should be surprised to find a man at once brewer and king. Remember Andreas Hofer.’

Which, of course, set Franz into singing ‘ Zu Mantua in Banden,’ with its touching words and rather commonplace music.

At Landeck there was more awaiting us than food and warmth, desirable and welcome as these were. The Professor had had another packet of letters forwarded ; and among them was one for me. By the handwriting on the envelope, I saw it was from Bonnie Lesley.

‘ Will she tell me anything about Hester

Burnham?' I thought. 'Will she at least write the name, that I may carry it about with me?'

The first words in the letter (and it was curious to read her successive statements without seeing her pretty looks of wonder accompanying them) were these—'Hester was with me the whole day yesterday; she is living with some friends at Notting Hill. I hope I am betraying no confidence in telling you something about her. I will tell you; and you shall send me in your next letter a promise of secrecy. Briefly, then, Hester is a little fool, and is about to make herself wretched for life. Of course, you know why. Alfred Burnham, I must tell you, in the first place, has come to *awful grief*; and, as far as I can understand these matters, has taken advantage of poor Hester's kindness—weakness, I call it—and has landed her *in extreme difficulties*.

I should not be surprised if she had to sell Burnham.'

To sell Burnham! Was it, then, reserved for this quiet little girl, so prudent and considerate in all her ways, to let the old house go away from the family that had owned it for many centuries? What had she done that the pain and the shame of this sacrifice should fall upon her? It is recorded in history that one of the Burnhams was shorn of three parts of the then extensive family estates (the alternative being that he should lose his right hand) for striking the Black Prince a blow on the face. That was the first step to narrow the means of the Burnhams; and now the last of the family, a girl, was to give up the final relic of their ancient power.

'Alfred Burnham,' continued the letter, 'has become penitent; and vows that the only thing to save him from ruin is for Hester to marry him. Perhaps he speaks



the truth ; and hopes to recover himself by the proceeds of the sale of Burnham ; but he has persuaded Hester that it is his moral reformation she is bound to accomplish. Now you know what an unselfish little puss she is, although you can't see that *as we women see it*. She is so far removed from the ordinary jealousies of the drawing-room, for example, that she will insist on other people singing her best songs ; and she will go about in her mouse-like way, making everybody display their best points while keeping herself in the background. Do you think she could turn a cat out of a chair she wanted to sit in ? Well, you know, all this is very pretty, and it makes one fond of the sly little woman, but there is a limit to it. And she has taken it into her small head that it is her duty to reform her cousin *by marrying him !* Did you ever hear of such a thing ?'

Yes, I had heard of it often. And I had seen cases in which pure and good women allowed themselves to suffer, through some such theory of duty and self-renunciation, the most cruel and revolting usage at the hands of men who only grew the more debased by being accustomed to presume on their great unselfishness.

‘I acknowledge,’ continued my correspondent, ‘that Hester has some spirit, and has a quiet, determined, managing way with her that many people don’t perceive, although they obey it. But what effect would that have on a man like Alfred Burnham, who would, I am sure, leave Burnham and its present mistress to themselves (that is if the former should not be sold) and be off to enjoy the pecuniary results of the marriage in freedom. Meanwhile, poor Hester is in a pitiable state of apprehension and indecision. She fancies she should marry him ; and yet

she shrinks from it. You know, she is not given to much crying, or hysterical nonsense; but yesterday, when she sat in this room, and spoke to me in her low, frank voice about these things, I saw tears slowly fill her eyes and stealthily trickle down her cheek. I put my arms round her neck, and hid her face, and let her cry to her heart's content, and then I gave her a hearty scolding. She was very much shocked by the way in which I spoke of her precious cousin; but I had the satisfaction of seeing that it had at least awoke her alarm. She went away without having said anything in particular. I am to see her in a day or two.

‘Tell me what you think of the *complication*. Is it likely that Frank Burnham would be anxious to marry Hester at once, if it is true that these monetary affairs will necessitate the sale of Burnham? Of course

the place would fetch a large sum, and there might be a handsome balance left, worthy of that gentleman's consideration; but somehow, from what Hester said, I have a suspicion that this terrible collapse on the part of Alfred may be only a *ruse*. In any case, he holds her securities for a considerable amount; for she told me of the altercation she had had with her trustees, lawyers, and what not, about the matter.

“Besides,” said I to Hester, “suppose you were capable of reforming your cousin, don't you reflect that, in sacrificing yourself, (as you assuredly would) you are also sacrificing some other man whom you might have made happy?”

“I have never given any man the right to think of me in that way,” she said, a little proudly.

“My dear,” said I, with the calmness of superior wisdom, “that is a right which men

assume without its being given them. Now, on your honour, is there no man whom you suspect of loving you?"

"The question is too absurd," she said, hastily, and turned away under some pretence or other.

'But for the first time I saw in her eyes, that are generally so honest and clear that they look through you, a sort of troubled concealment. Can you read me my riddle, Mr. Foreigner, and tell me who is going to carry off the lady of Burnham? You see I have not given in yet to Hester's folly, but I shall have a hard fight with her, I am afraid, before I can make her change her mind.'

There was nothing else of any importance in the letter, except that, curiously enough, the envelope contained a slip of paper with a few words, and a '*glückliche Reise!*' from Mr. Morell. How came this enclosure there?

## CHAPTER VI.

## BONNIE LESLEY'S METAPHOR.

THE long journey through cold and rain, and the late dinner that followed, made our party rather sleepy that evening. The Professor subsided into a soft slumber, which Franz would not break by taking out his zither. Indeed, the whole of us were in a comatose state, and had just sufficient energy to keep our cigars from going out, so that I had plenty of time to think over the contents of Bonnie Lesley's long letter. The friendly confidence therein displayed, and the concluding hint it contained, were chiefly, I fancy, the result of an excursion which she and I had made to Richmond, and which put our relations on a

much more intimate footing than they had ever hitherto been. The history of that excursion was a curious one. When I went up to London after recovering from the accident down in Buckinghamshire, I expected that Bonnie Lesley would be much embarrassed when we met. The reader may remember the peculiar confession which the beautiful penitent made. For a woman to tell you that she has been trying to make you fall in love with her, in order to revenge herself on somebody else, and in order to prove to this third person that she was worth falling in love with, is rather a startling revelation. Under ordinary circumstances, you could not help despising the woman who could act in this fashion, however ashamed of herself she professed to be. At least, you would expect that this sense of shame would hang about her for some little time, and put some constraint on her manner.

With Bonnie Lesley nothing of the kind happened. When I met her in London, she comported herself as if nothing had occurred.

‘Is it true,’ I asked myself, thoroughly amazed, ‘what Heatherleigh says—that she has no soul? Is she incapable of feeling shame, or any other emotion whatever?’

I looked back over our long friendship ; and she seemed to have been always the same. I began to see, however, in many of her words and actions which I could remember, a sort of self-conscious effort to reach sensitiveness, as if she thought it her duty to be emotionally struck by such and such a picture, or view, or person. She wanted to be what she could not be. She saw this emotional faculty in other women, and strove to attain it without success. Yet she counterfeited it sometimes with an earnest hypocrisy which was less of a vice than a virtue. The only time I ever saw her genuinely moved



was when she made my sick-room down in Bucks her confessional ; yet now, a month or two afterwards, she met me as if she had never been there.

I was rejoiced to find her so little embarrassed. It was better to sink that old time, with its foolish notions. So I, too, met Bonnie Lesley as if nothing had occurred, and we succeeded so well in dropping into the ordinary relations of friends, that she confided to me a great secret, and asked my co-operation.

‘The day after to-morrow,’ she said, ‘I am going down to see Mr. Lewison’s three little nieces—great friends of mine—who are at school in Richmond. I often go down to see them ; and they are good enough to call me Auntie Canary, because, I suppose, I have yellow hair. I don’t know any other reason. Well, it is no great fun for the poor little things to be asked to a formal luncheon

with the school-mistress and me ; and I have determined this time to go down early, get them a holiday, and take them to dine at the Star and Garter. Fancy their delight. But nobody here must know anything about it, until they find it out afterwards ; and so I am going to ask you to write and make the proper arrangements for us at the hotel—do you see? ’

‘Yes,’ said I. ‘But a far simpler way would be to let me go with you.’

‘I am going alone,’ she said, doubtfully, but with a puzzled laugh in her eyes.

‘I shall go alone, too ; and meet you there.’

Even now she looked surprised and pleased, although I know she had anticipated the offer.

‘There is no reason why you shouldn’t come up to Mr. Lewison’s, and drive down with me in the brougham,’ she said ; ‘but it

would add a little mystery and romance, wouldn't it, if you did meet us down there?'

'Then that is settled,' said I. 'You go down and get your nieces out. I accidentally meet you at the gate of Richmond Park above the hotel, at 'one o'clock. I am delighted to see you——'

'Well, I hope so,' she said.

'——and your young charges also. I accompany you on your walk, and instruct them in the differences between the roe, fallow, and red-deer. Perhaps we have time to walk down by Ham House and the river. Then the sight of Richmond Hill recalls to me that the children must be getting hungry; and I invite you all to dine with me at the hotel, which we can see in the distance.'

'But, at present, it looks as if I were inviting you to dine with me,' she said, with a touch of fun in her eyes.

'No,' I said, 'that is not proper. Shall it be one o'clock?'

'Yes, one,' she said.

It was in the middle of summer, but a light wind, blowing over the wooded country through which the Thames slowly winds, cooled the sun's heat and sent flakes of white cloud gently across the intense blue overhead. There was a midday haze clinging about the horizon; and even here, among the rugged oaks and undulating slopes of Richmond Park, there was a sleepiness and silence that seemed to weigh on the large, mild eyes of the deer. Warm and still, too, lay the woods along the river, showing every shade of green, until in the remote west they turned into a faint purplish-grey. The haze hid Windsor; and so the beautiful wooded valley seemed to lose itself in the white of the horizon.

Bonnie Lesley was punctual. Shortly

before one o'clock, I caught a glimpse of a figure, far down the road, that actually shone in the sunlight. Even at that distance I could see that she wore her favourite colour—a pale blue silk dress, with a white shawl over it so thin that the blue shone through, and a remarkably small and glossy white hat, with a pert blue feather in it. I supposed that she had, as usual, either a bunch of blue forget-me-nots or a white rose in her yellow hair, and that she wore some strings of large white beads round her neck. She had a white parasol, also, with a gleam of blue round the edge.

There were three children round her, clearly all talking to her at once, and coming along in that half-skipping, half-jumping fashion indicative of juvenile excitement. I could hear their voices a long way off.

I was very much surprised and delighted

to see her, of course ; and was formally introduced to her young friends. Two of them were fair and ordinary-looking young misses, but the third one was a little Brownie, with large, mischievous brown eyes, and soft brown hair. Anything to approach the impudence, the cleverness, and the winning, fascinating ways of this little miss I have never seen. Although the youngest, she was the spokeswoman for her sisters, and did not a little to shock them by the audacity of her fun. During the whole day, it was 'O Ethel ! how can you ?' or, 'O Ethel, I *do* wonder what has come over you !' Ethel remarked that she preferred the company of gentlemen to that of ladies ; so she took my arm, and we walked on in advance of the others.

She began to tell me of her school-mates, and their friends, and her friends. She mimicked this one's pompous manner, and

that one's gruff voice, and then gave an admirable imitation of her music-mistress.

'She never does rap our knuckles, you know, with a pencil, when we make a mistake; but she pretends to do it, and then laughs—so—and thinks it is funny. She always sings, too, when she counts; and, oh, dear! she can't sing a bit, and it is so dreadful! She tries to follow the music with her "one, two, three, four; one, two, three, four," and she does it out of time and leads you wrong. Now how *could* you help yourself if you had a music-mistress like that?'

'I should ask her not to sing.'

Ethel burst out laughing.

'That is all you know about school! My stars! she would box your ears, and then send you home. There's the French mistress, too—she's another caution—I beg your pardon—I must say "fright." Lottie White's

brother—oh, such a wicked boy he is!—told Lottie to ask Madame if she would translate the name of a play, ‘Love’s last Shift,’ into ‘La dernière chemise de l’amour’? and Madame’s rage was awful. She is pale and dark, and has a moustache, and I think she says very naughty things sometimes, when she is angry, under her breath. You should hear her when she comes into the class-room at eleven. She says to us all, “Good morning, my dear children” (she says it in French, but I shan’t let you hear my pronunciation), “I hope you will be good children to-day, and profit by your lessons.” Lottie White’s brother says that is her grace before meat.’

‘Do you like French, Ethel?’

‘No; I am afraid it will broaden my nose if I go on with it. And Lottie White’s brother says the French are a weak sort of people, for they can’t say *no* without using two words.’



‘Lottie White’s brother seems to say a good many things. Do you see him often?’

‘That is a secret,’ said Ethel, with a comic shyness. ‘I am not going to tell tales out of school.’

‘Will you come and dine with me at the hotel over there?’

‘Oh, with pleasure!’ she said, with a mock curtsy.

‘Do you think you could persuade your sisters and your aunt to come also?’

‘That isn’t material, is it?’ she said, looking up.

‘But it would be so much better—so much jollier to have them all with us.’

‘Then I will ask them.’

She stopped and turned to the others.

‘Ladies and gentlemen,’ she said, with admirable gravity, ‘we invite you to dinner. You needn’t change your dress; there will

be no ceremony ; and no papas and mammas to interfere at dessert.'

' You forget me, Ethel,' said Bonnie Lesley.

' Oh, we can always coax Auntie Canary into good humour by saying she has pretty hair.'

' Oh, Ethel ! ' said her elder sisters, in a breath.

So it was arranged that we should proceed at once to dinner. There were but few people in the large dining-room ; and when the three small ladies and their aunt had left their hats and superfluous articles of attire upstairs, we secured a table at the spacious bay-window which used to look out upon the garden and the far sunlit landscape beyond.

' Oh, how *very* jolly ! ' cried Ethel, as she plumped herself down in a big, soft chair. ' I wish Auntie Canary was our

mamma, and would take us to live in hotels always. Wouldn't it be jolly to live always in hotels, and have everything you ask for, and no school-mistresses or lessons?'

'When you are grown-up, Ethel,' said Bonnie Lesley, 'you will be able to live always in hotels if you please.'

'But I mayn't like it then,' said Ethel, with precocious philosophy.

The majority of voices carried the day in favour of sparkling Carlowitz; Ethel wisely observing, however, that she would rather drink no wine at dinner, and have a glass of port at dessert.

'It is the proper time for wine, isn't it, Auntie? And you know I'm very, very fond of port wine; it is because I was christened in it, and so I must always like it.'

I was about to ask her the meaning of this remark, which I did not understand, when a

sharp rattle was heard on the window, which made the children jump. I looked out and saw on the window-sill a small blue tom-tit, that was bleeding at the bill and lying quite motionless. We raised the window and brought the unlucky little bird inside, but it was just dying. Ethel took it before its heart ceased to beat, and while there was yet a dumb, frightened stare in its small bright eyes ; and she folded her hands round it and kept it close into her bosom, to see if she could revive it. I saw her big brown eyes fill with tears, when it became clear that the bird was dead ; and it was some little time before the natural gaiety of the children recovered from the shock.

‘ Birds don’t go to heaven when they die,’ said Ethel, contemplatively. ‘ The best they can expect is to be stuffed and put in a glass case.’

‘ Don’t you think, Ethel,’ I asked, ‘ that the

tom-tit saw your aunt from the outside, and killed itself on purpose that she might wear it on her hat?'

'It's Auntie Canary, not Auntie Tom-tit,' said Ethel, rather irrelevantly, but with the effect of making her sisters scream with laughter.

The young ones were in no hurry with their dinner, and they lingered quite as long over dessert. Ethel had now become quite possessed with excitement, and was making small speeches, and acting, and mimicking all manner of people, to the alarm of her sisters.

'Oh, Ethel,' they cried, 'you must be mad.'

'So you said when I called Mr. Templeton a parson. But he is a parson, for a clergyman is a parson, isn't he, Mr. Ives?'

'Yes; I think so.'

'And he comes into a room like this—

mincing and treading on his toes, and he peers—*so*—through his blue spectacles, and he bows—*so*—over the hand of the lady he goes up to; and he always holds his cup between his finger and thumb—*so*—and says, “I am so pleased to see yah this evening”—just as he drawls in the pulpit “Ah Fathah which aht in heaven——”

‘Ethel!’ said Miss Lesley, sharply; and Ethel’s sisters looked inexpressibly shocked.

For a moment or two Ethel’s countenance fell; but she was presently in her old mood again, and gaily narrating how Lottie White’s brother had thrown some lucifer-matches on the stage when he was admitted, along with the other relatives of the school-girls, to see a French comedy performed by the young ladies.

‘But do you know what Mrs. Graham is particularly angry about just now, Auntie?’ she said.

‘ No,’ said Auntie, with wondering eyes.

‘ Well, you must know, ladies and gentlemen, that in the spring we had a gardener. He was a very nice person, for he used last autumn to smuggle us all kinds of fruit, and we paid him with our pocket-money, when we had any. Well, Mrs. Graham told him he must leave, and gave him a month’s notice. So Mr. Gardener dug, and dug, and dug ; and made squares, and diamonds, and lozenges ; and filled them all with seed, and put bits of stick in, with names written on them. Do you know how much money Mrs. Graham gave him for seed for the kitchen and the flower garden ?’

‘ No.’

‘ Nearly 5*l*. Wasn’t it a lot ? Well, after the gardener had gone, we waited to see the flowers come up in the squares and diamonds ; and we knew what to expect as the

earliest, for he had written all the names of the flowers on the sticks. But first one thing didn't come up, and then another thing didn't come up, until everybody knows now that he never sowed any seed at all. Wasn't it a capital joke, Auntie !'

'It was no joke, Ethel: it was dishonesty,' said Bonnie Lesley.

'But it may be a joke as well, mayn't it?'

Then she asked, with the air of a young princess, one of the waiters to tell her what o'clock it was.

'Five minutes to four, miss,' he said.

'Oh, fancy, fancy!' she cried, with a gesture of delight,—'fancy, ladies and gentlemen, our having been three hours at dinner! Did ever any one hear of the like? And I have had—oh, how many kinds of fruit and sweets!'

'A great deal too many, Ethel,' said the eldest of her sisters, severely.



‘Then I shall be ill to-morrow morning, I suppose. But you know, Emmy, that that is all nonsense. We *don’t* get ill after eating heaps of jellies and sweets and fruit; and it is only the old people who say so to frighten us. I suppose they don’t like them, and they envy us our liking them.’

‘Ethel!’ said Miss Lesley, reprovingly, ‘you’re becoming rude: don’t you know I am your elder?’

‘Oh, Auntie Canary, you’ve hair like a fairy!’ said Ethel, with wicked merriment in her brown eyes, and with a burst of laughter which was sufficiently infectious.

I think they would readily have stayed there all the evening; and it was with some evident reluctance that Ethel accompanied her sisters upstairs to prepare for going back to school. When we arrived there, we found Mr. Lewison’s brougham already waiting; and Bonnie Lesley only stayed

a few minutes to say good-bye to the school-mistress.

Then she came out. As I handed her into the carriage, I said—

‘Won’t you offer to drive me up to town?’

For a second there was a puzzled and surprised look in her eyes; then I saw an inadvertent glance towards the solemn person, in a green coat, brass buttons, and black cockade, who stood at the door; and then she said, suddenly—

‘Yes, with pleasure. Do come. And you will go on and see Mr. Lewison, won’t you?’

‘That,’ said I, when the grave person had shut the door, and received his instructions, ‘is a matter we can settle afterwards.’

It was a ladies’ brougham. No one had ever smoked in it. On the contrary, the dark green lining and cushions were saturated with various scents; and in one of the

leathern pouches there was placed a flask purporting to have come from one of the fifty Farinas of Cologne. Now one of Bonnie Lesley's weaknesses was a love of powerful perfumes; and on this mild summer evening she not only insisted on having both the windows up, but she took down this bottle (how singular it is that all these Farinas write in the same fashion!) and splashed about the contents until the atmosphere was suffocating.

'Do you wish us, then,' I asked, 'to die of the fumes of spirits of wine? Charcoal would be preferable.'

'Do you think so?' she asked, with a wondering little laugh. 'If it were possible to die of eau-de-cologne, I should choose that death. You, being a man, would of course choose to be drowned in a butt of claret?'

This led us on to talk of a tragic circum-

stance that was interesting newspaper-readers at the time. A young man, of good family, happened to fall in love with a governess who lived in his father's house, a pretty young girl who unfortunately was equally in love with him. The young man insisted on marrying this girl; the father threatened him with the usual penalties if he did; and the governess was ordered to leave. On the day before she was to go, the father was sitting in the drawing-room, at the end of which was a conservatory opening into the garden. His son and the governess came into this conservatory, and sat down beside a small table, on which some wine and glasses had been left. The father, probably wanting to see how the two lovers would behave, sat still and looked through the glass doors. Standing with his back to him, the son apparently poured something into two glasses, giving one of them to the girl.

With surprise, he saw them both stand up, clasp each other's hand, and with the left hand raise the glasses to their lips. 'It is a lover's parting,' he thought. The next moment the girl sank into the chair behind her, and the young man fell heavily back on the stone floor. The father rushed to the conservatory, opened the doors, and was immediately struck by the powerful odour of almonds that was in the air. Both of the lovers were dead.

The circumstance naturally produced a profound sensation, and most people, while deprecating, in a conventional fashion, the rashness of the suicide, sympathised with the two unfortunates, and were inclined to look upon the deed as rather heroic.

'I suppose you, too, think it was very heroic,' I said to Bonnie Lesley, 'this devoted love, and constancy, and resolution?'

'Well,' she said, 'I think it is fine in

these days to meet some such story as this, to show you that love is still possible, and that it is capable of triumphing over the worldly and selfish notions that are common.'

'Do you know,' I said, 'that the story of Edward A—— and that young girl produces quite the contrary impression upon me? I look upon it as the worst symptom I know of the degraded sentiment of the present time. Why did he kill himself and her? Not for the sake of their love, but on account of his father's threat. His real theory was, "I love this girl, and wish to marry her. But if I do I must become poor, and give up society. So, rather than lose the luxuries to which I have been accustomed, I will kill myself and the girl also." Confess, now, that he was an abject sneak, instead of a hero!'

'Well,' she said, doubtingly, with a smile,

‘there is something in what you say. But unless he had loved the girl very much——’

‘I say he loved his social position more. Look at the circumstances. Here are two young people, with average health, who have fallen in love. They have youth, hope, a good circulation, and faith in each other. What more would they like? The world is before them. People with far less stock-in-trade have encountered the conditions of life, got to understand them, and managed to live very comfortably. Poverty is as yet an unknown experience for them: they have not that excuse for going to extremes. But the man is so great a coward that he distrusts his capacity to exist without his father’s help. He fears to take the chance of the future which hundreds of thousands of men and women, far from heroic, annually take; and so he says, “Life without my horses, cigars, and wine would be worse than

death ; and, therefore, Bessy dear, we must die." Such is the product of the sentiment of England in the nineteenth century !'

'You have converted me,' she said. 'I think he was a contemptible coward, and the only pity is that the girl was killed as well.'

'So, Mr. Edward,' she continued presently, in a lighter tone, 'you have suddenly taken a strong opinion on the point that differences of social station should not interfere with love-marriages. Does your theory hold both ways—for instance, when the woman is rich or well-born, and the man is poor?'

'No, it does not.'

'Oh, you think a woman who is rich should not marry a man who is poor?'

'What is the use of laying down arbitrary laws, when every case is dissimilar, when——'

'Don't be angry. Let us take one case.



The lady is well-born, tender-hearted, tolerably rich, and has a pretty considerable pride in her ancestry. The lover has no family-tree, and little money; but he has all manner of manly and loveable qualities that win the lady's liking and admiration. Now, ought they to marry?'

'Not in England; particularly if she has a lot of friends and relatives.'

'A decisive judgment,' she said, smiling; 'still you leave me a loop-hole of escape. They may marry out of England. Then you don't see any real obstacle to their union, so far as they themselves are concerned?'

'How can there be?'

'Forgive me for saying it, but you stare at such a notion as if there was something ghastly in it. Yet it is natural that, wherever she goes, the girl will retain much of the opinions she has caught in our English atmosphere, and may even at times show the

awkwardness of over-striving to convince the man that he is her equal.'

'Then they ought not to marry, if such is her character. It depends wholly on that. If she is honest and earnest in loving the man, there will be no question of awkwardness, no embarrassment between them; and so far from striving to make him her equal, she will look up to him as her natural superior.'

'And do you really think,' she asked, slowly, 'that there is one woman in England capable of all this?'

'Plenty,' I answered.

'Why,' she said, with a look of pleased astonishment, 'your splendid belief in women is quite catching. Do you know that, when I hear you talk so, I feel that I could go and be a heroine such as you imagine. I do, indeed; but then I should probably feel myself badly qualified for the part after-

wards, and regret that I had undertaken it. Still, I like to hear you talk so ; for we women cannot be so very bad if one or two men think of us like that. I suppose,' she added, turning her eyes upon me, 'that you don't know of any two people who could try such an experiment as that we described.'

'I? How should I?'

'I do.'

'Indeed.'

'Yes, and strangely enough, I am the friend of both of them. Yet I don't think they will ever marry.'

'Why?'

'Because,' she said slowly, 'the man is proud, and the woman is sensitive and reserved. The one will not speak, and the other cannot make advances; and so they allow the chance to slip by, and other circumstances will arise. The woman will be led into marrying some one else; and the

man will break his heart slowly in work that has lost interest for him.'

'You don't give me any suggestion,' she said, rather petulantly, after a while. 'What have you to say about these two?'

'Oh, nothing. They are probably unfitted for each other, or they would have come to an understanding long ago.'

'Now that is just the point I meant to arrive at,' she said. 'What is it that prevents their coming to an understanding? You've seen two drops of water on a table lie perfectly still and quiet, although they are within an eighth of an inch of each other. But if you put the least thing between them—if you draw one of them a little way with the point of a needle, there is a splendid rush and you can't tell the one from the other. I am the mutual friend of these two people——'

'And you would perform the office of the friendly needle?'

‘Precisely. I owe a debt of gratitude to the one, and a debt of contrition to the other ; what if I paid both off by one grand stroke of mediation ?’

‘Taking it for granted that both of them would thank you—that, in other words, both of them love each other. It is taking too much for granted, Miss Lesley.’

‘But at least there could be no harm in my attempting it, and seeing how far it would be acceptable to both.’

‘You mean,’ said I, calmly, ‘that you intend to pave the way for a marriage between Miss Burnham and myself.’

She started visibly when I thus dragged her from the ambush of metaphor.

‘You frighten me,’ she said, ‘when you speak in that cold and bitter way, as if you were suffering greatly, and still laughed at your sufferings. What is it you see between you and her ?’

Yes, indeed: what was it that kept hovering between me and Hester Burnham—blotting out the beautiful lines of her features and the lustre of her eyes, so that I could see them no more?—what but the face of Weavle and the memory of those early years?

\* \* \* \*

The Professor awoke with a snore.

‘I have slept,’ he said.

‘We have all been asleep,’ said Franz, ‘except Mr. Edward, who has been sitting and dreaming of England, with an open letter in his hand. Were the dreams pleasant?’

‘Yes,’ I said. ‘They were about Richmond, in England, and a summer-day I spent there.’

‘Ah, I dined there once,’ said the Professor, ‘with several of your great men. I was surprised to find that they ate much and

spoke little. But that was of no consequence to me, as I could find nobody who could speak French with ease, and so I was helpless.'

Silber went to the window, and uttered a shout of joy.

'The rain is over; the night is fine. Herr Professor, we shall have a beautiful day to-morrow.'

So we departed to our several rooms. Mine was next to that of Franz; and I could hear him singing of Schiller's wonderful maiden who came down into the valley, in the spring-time. How did it fare, I thought, with that tender-hearted girl who was then among the dark trees of Burnham? At least, the same sky was over our heads, and, though we might never see each other on the voyage, we were still travelling towards the same far bourne.

## CHAPTER VII.

## INNSBRUCK.

SILBER was right in his conjecture. Never was there a lovelier morning than that on which we started from Landeck to wander down the picturesque valley of the Inn to Imst. We had gradually ascended for a day or two, until even the valleys were high above the level of the sea ; and the rarity of the mountain-air had its natural effect upon our spirits. Then the beauty of the country—the swollen, rushing, grey waters of the Inn sweeping down the spacious chasm, the warm sunlight lying on the small farm-houses, the fronts of which were covered with yellow maize hung out to dry, the



flocks of goats on the hill-sides, the great masses of berberry - bushes covered with scarlet, wax-like berries, and all around the magnificent hills, with the splendid peaks of the Tschürgant and Sonnenspitz hemming in the end of the valley !

Much wilder and more solitary was the great valley which we entered after leaving Imst. Here the mountains showed a peculiar, soft, olive-green hue up to the very snow-line ; and when the sun fell on these far masses of hills, the olive-green became warm and dark, like velvet in fire-light. Round the base of the mountains stretched large forests, here and there broken by a patch of grey, where a mountain-torrent had cleared a passage for itself down to the Inn, bringing masses of *débris* with it. It was Sunday, too ; and in some small village, shining yellow with hung-up maize, you would hear the crack of the rifle echoing

along the hills, Sunday, after service, being the favourite time for the Tyroler's practising. Occasionally we met a sturdy peasant marching along with his huge weapon in its cumbersome waterproof-covering, wondering, probably, how many kreutzer-points he was likely to make. The women, having come from the small village church, were in their finest attire, and stared curiously at us as they returned Franz's '*Grüss Gott!*' while the young lasses, in their braided bodices, short petticoats, and peculiar hats, had a sly look at Silber, whose student-appearance they doubtless admired extremely.

'Do you know that chamois is to be had here for sixpence per pound?' said Franz, 'so we need not scruple to ask for it in the inns.'

We remained a few days at Silz, exploring the Oetzthal and filling our portfolios with sketches; and we soon got accustomed to eat

chamois. Indeed chamois flesh much more nearly resembles in flavour roe-deer venison than the flesh of the goat, a dainty we occasionally met with, but failed to appreciate. From Silz we passed along the splendid Ober-Innthal, with its masses of grey limestone mountains, flecked with snow, the needle-peaks of the Selrain lying down in the south. Towards sunset we drew near Innsbruck; and I shall never forget the strange appearance which presented itself to us near Zirl. The sun had sunk behind the Tschürgant, far in the west; and all around us the lime-stone mountains were darkening in their grey, the sky above having changed from red and gold to a pale, chilly green. All at once, as we looked up and over the dark mountains on our left, we saw an immense cone of fire, still and cold. The wonderful gleam of this snow-peak, which, rising into the pallid and dusky twilight,

caught the last light of the sun, had an extraordinary effect ; it seemed as if the dark ridge of mountains in front alone separated us from a world on fire on the other side.

‘ Do not look at that any more,’ said the Professor, ‘ or it will turn red, and then grey, and then purple. Come away now ; and as long as you live you will be able to see in your mind that wonderful peak of yellow fire standing all by itself in the twilight.’

Then we passed underneath the Martinswand, where, as you may know, the Emperor Maximilian, chasing a chamois, rolled down a precipice, and clung on to a projecting rock. No one could reach him ; but the priest of the neighbourhood got up a procession, raised the host, gave the Emperor absolution, and implored divine succour ; whereupon an angel, in the guise of a chamois-hunter, appeared and saved the Emperor, to the great glory of the Church.

‘Now,’ said the Professor, ‘the story of the Emperor’s peril and deliverance seems to be well authenticated ; and I take it that he was rescued by a chamois-hunter—probably one of his attendants. I should like to know how they smuggled this poor man out of the road in order to persuade the people that it was an angel who saved the Emperor’s life.’

‘Very likely they murdered him for the good of the Church,’ remarked Franz.

‘It is clear,’ said the Professor, ‘that he could not have been ennobled, or presented with a piece of land in his native valley, for either would have contradicted the story of the angel. He could not have remained in the character of angel at Maximilian’s court, or in custody of a farm ; for we don’t naturalise angels, even in legends.’

‘They may have given him a post in the army,’ said Franz ; ‘and very likely he would

live to a good old age, and hear the story of the miraculous deliverance so often that he would come to believe it himself. But there is something highly humorous in the notion of the worthy priest, while the Emperor was hanging on to a rock, getting up a religious procession and going through ceremonies at the foot of the place, instead of sending people with ropes. I wonder if Maximilian swore at them ; and whether he felt inclined to hang the lot of them after he came down ?’

‘I admire your efforts at historical criticism,’ said Silber. ‘You are supplementing one legend with half a dozen others ; and the result is that you miss the points of divergence, and end in vapour.’

This, I take leave to say, is perhaps the most idiotic remark ever made ; but Silber delivered it in an impressive and thoughtful manner, as befitted a man who knew some-

thing of Heidelberg, metaphysics, and beer. Franz looked at Silber, expecting him to laugh ; but when he saw that Silber was in earnest, he took to whistling ; and so we went on.

The dark and narrow streets of the capital of the Tyrol were glittering with gas-lamps as we crossed the broad bridge and entered the town. We made our way to our appointed resting-place, and for the first time for some weeks found ourselves surrounded with the luxuries of a hotel. There were still a few tourists in Innsbruck, chiefly American ; but there were one or two English, and it was with a strange sensation that I heard my native language spoken again. We dined at the table d'hôte that evening ; and I can believe that the English family who sat opposite us, looked with some wonder and a little contempt upon our peculiar travelling-dress. Indeed, with

that airy confidence which distinguishes our countrymen abroad, the father and eldest son made some observations which, to put Franz in a good humour, I translated to him. He laughed heartily, and looked so pointedly at our opposite neighbours that they spoke less loudly thereafter.

There was no letter from Heatherleigh. What had occurred to interfere with his writing? We had a walk, after dinner, through the low archways and along the narrow thoroughfares of the town, and then we retired to rest, somewhat tired after our long ramble.

Next morning we went to have a look at the environs of Innsbruck, and made our way up to the hill on which the Schloss Amras is built. From the tower of this castle we had an excellent view of the great and elevated plain through which runs the Inn, cutting Innsbruck in two on its way.



So lofty is this plain that the mountains which surround it have their snow-line singularly low ; so that the visitor, looking at them on a warm autumn-day, is struck by the notion that he can easily walk up the side of one of those huge masses of limestone and find himself walking upon snow. The Martinswand now seemed to block up the entrance to the Ober-Innthal, through which we had come on the previous afternoon ; and lying on this side, just looking down on the plain, and on the many steeples of Innsbruck, were the grey and misty bulks of the Solstein, Brandjoch, Seegruben, Rumer Joch, and Speck-Kor, with here and there a small cluster of houses near their base, whence rose a pale blue smoke into the morning sunlight.

‘What,’ said Franz, ‘if that wonderful fire-peak we saw last night was the Solstein over there ; and what if the mountain got

its name because it catches the evening light like that ? ’

‘ Nothing more probable,’ said the Professor. ‘ The great Solstein lies just behind the Martinswand.’

‘ And is 9,300 feet high,’ said Silber, who had been bothering the peasantry all the way along with questions.

We went through the quaint old castle, and Franz was permitted to play an air on the chamber-organ that once belonged to Philippina Welser. The instrument was in fair tune, and the result sufficiently good. What honest workmen they must have had in these times ! Fancy how one of our gorgeous piano-fortes—all carved wood, and satin, and polish—will sound four hundred years hence.

That evening we went to the theatre ; the Professor, however, remaining at the hotel ; and, as luck would have it, the piece to

be played was Benedix's 'Mathilde ; oder, ein deutsches Frauenherz,' the hero of which is a poor artist. We had a box for three florins ; although Silber pointed out that the manager, wishing to make his theatre a means of education, had offered all students tickets at reduced rates. 'Für die Herren Studierenden sind Parterre-Billets à 25 Kr. bei Herrn Universitäts-Pedell Hofer zu haben.' Silber fancied he ought to have the same privilege as the university-students, and evidently thought he would rather be in the pit among the soldiers and the scholars than in the boxes with the comfortable and Philistine *bourgeoisie*.

It was a hard ordeal for the piece that it should have been criticised by a band of young artists, who, just fresh from a long journey, were practical in their notions and courageous in their hopes. Franz was most unmercifully severe upon poor Berthold

Arnau, the artist, who is in love with a rich merchant's daughter; who has grand dreams, and is tortured by distrust of his own capacity; who makes love to Mathilde secretly, and then tamely submits to be turned out of the house, with shame and contumely, when his love is discovered.

‘What a fool of an artist!’ cried Franz, with infinite contempt. ‘What is the use of his crying, “I feel it; I feel the power within me; and then it dies away, and I am in despair!” Instead of vapouring to a girl, why doesn’t he sit down and take out his palette?’

Further on, when Mathilde has left her father’s house and married Berthold, who is now grown rich and prosperous, the father offers to be reconciled, and the offer is repulsed.

‘A fool again,’ cried Franz. ‘A real artist would look with indifference upon all these

things. He would not remember a by-gone grudge against a stupid old merchant for all these years. He would say, "Here is my hand, old gentleman, if it is of any use to you; but go away now, for I have my pictures to look after." He ought to be above the opinions or insults of a Philister—*nicht wahr*, Silber?'

Silber started.

'Yes,' he said, 'it is a very good piece.'

'I have it,' said Franz in a whisper. 'Don't you think that Mathilde there, with her black eyes and hair, is something like Fräulein Riedel?'

There was certainly some resemblance between Fräulein Anschütz (to whom I beg to pay a passing compliment) of the Innsbruck National-Theater and Fräulein Riedel, of the Munich Volks-Theater.

'Silber is trying hard to imagine himself in Munich, and that the little Riedel is before

him. Will he cry presently? No; he has drank no beer this evening.'

Silber, however, applauded most boisterously at the end of each effective scene in which Mathilde appeared—so much so that Mathilde inadvertently glanced up at our box.

'She thanks you, Silber,' said Franz; 'wouldn't you give your ears now for a bouquet?'

'She acts remarkably well,' said Silber, hotly.

'That is no reason why you should bite my head off,' said Franz. 'All I know is that her stage husband is a prig, and should have been a lacquey rather than an artist. Yet Fels is not a bad actor; and I have seen many worse than Herr Ströhl. I will drink their very good health, and yours, Silber, and that of a young lady who rather resembles Fräulein Anschütz, when we go out.'

‘Ah, you think she *does* resemble Fräulein Riedel?’ said Silber, eagerly.

‘You do, at least; for I don’t believe you know anything of the piece. Now what is the name of Mathilde’s brother?’

‘Stuff!’ said Silber, turning angrily away.

When Mathilde had at length effected a reconciliation between her husband and her father by means of her ‘*deutschen Frauenherz*,’ we left the theatre, and proceeded on a prowl through the town, visiting such places of amusement as were still open for the benefit of the soldiers. Now we entered a gaily-lit beer-garden, again we heard a little music, and so forth, until Franz, who was beyond the ameliorating and controlling influences of his zither, and who had drank a little more wine than was necessary, began to wax warm about political matters, and generally expressed his readiness to fight any man or woman born in the whole of the

Tyrolese capital. But the fit did not last long ; for presently he was off into the dark streets again, singing somewhat loudly the mad carnival song

Alle Vögele singet so hell,  
Bis am Samstag z' Obed ;  
Alle Meideli hättet mi gern,  
O ! wie bin i ploget.

Narro !

Hidele, hädele, hinterm Städtele  
Hät en Bettelmann Hochzit ;  
Es giget e Musle, 's tanzet e Läusle,  
Es schlägt en Igele Trumme ;  
Alle Thierle wo Wädeli hond,\*  
Sollet zur Hochzit kumme !

Narro !

When we got home to the hotel, we found the Professor and an American gentleman busily discussing the merits of the various Continental galleries ; the American speaking French fluently, and with very little intonation.

\* Alle Thierchen, die Schwänze haben,  
Sollen zur Hochzeit kommen.



We did not stay long in Innsbruck ; there being little (beyond some picturesque street-views) worthy of an artist's attention in the place. We followed the course of the Inn to Jenbach ; and there we turned sharply to the left, ascending the main street of the steep little village, and following the road that leads up and over the hills to the Achen-see. What a strangely solitary lake this is, lying high among the mountains ; and how beautiful were its clear blue waters as we first caught a sight of them, with the sunlight lying over the wooded slopes that descend almost perpendicularly to the shore, while a slight wind was causing the keen blue surface to ripple in lines of light. Our road wound along the right bank of the lake, under the craggy rocks, with their thick brushwood and ferns ; but we met no carriages on this narrow path, for a bridge had broken down some two days

before, on this side of Scholastica. The perfect stillness of the lake and of the solitary mountains was quite unbroken; and the warm sunlight seemed to have hushed the animal and insect life of the woods into peace. Near the other side of the lake, we could see a woman pulling a small boat; but no sound was heard, as the prow slowly divided the brilliant plain of blue.

When we got up to this broken bridge, we found a carriage and a pair of horses which had been hired by a party of English ladies at Jenbach. Not one of the ladies could speak German; and they stood on the road, having descended from the carriage, blankly staring at the broken planks of the bridge, and at the two or three swarthy men who were driving in new piles. Their coachman was doing his best (by much shouting) to let them know that there was no help for it—back they must go to

Jenbach. When I explained the position of affairs to them, they poured torrents of sarcasm and abuse upon the stupidity of the peasants who had not sent word of the accident on to that village.

‘The workmen,’ I told them, ‘say that for three florins they will patch the bridge together and take your carriage over.’

After a good deal of bargaining, they agreed to pay the three florins; but the head-workman was seized with a fit of honesty, and admitted it would be of no use, as there was another bridge broken, just beyond Scholastica.

‘This is a pretty country,’ said one of the ladies, with a sneer.

‘There seems to be nothing left for you to do but to return,’ I said; ‘so I shall wish you good-day and a pleasant journey.’

‘Oh no! pray don’t leave us without telling these men that—that——’

But there was nothing to tell them. Abuse of the Tyrol and the Tyrolese generally was a communication which it was quite unnecessary to make to the poor bridge-makers, who had again betaken themselves to their labours.

‘May I ask where you were going to?’

‘To Munich, of course. Here is our contract, written in French, made with that rascal in Jenbach, who *knew* the bridge was broken down.’

The speaker was one of those tall, solitary-looking ladies who are constantly seen in Continental hotels, and who go wandering about Europe with a charming belief in the omnipotence of the English tongue and a fine contempt for the manners and customs of the people whom they deign to visit. She had adopted, further, the ordinary theory of Englishwomen, that, in travelling, they ought to wear the ugliest dress that

their ingenious fancy in that way can invent ; and a very charming picture did this gaunt person form, as she stood and glared at the unconscious Tyrolese peasants.

‘ Then you must go back to Jenbach, and proceed from thence by rail to Rosenheim and Munich ; or you can wait at Jenbach until the bridge is ready, probably by Monday next.’

So saying, we went on our way, and saw them no more. But I do not envy the inn-keeper at Jenbach when they returned to him—that is, if he could understand either French or English.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## HEATHERLEIGH'S FEAT.

ONCE more in the quiet and white Königin-Strasse, fronting the yellowing trees of the Englischer-Garten. Munich looked quite homely when we returned to it. But I went into its formal and stately streets without much hope of meeting there any welcome faces, such as I used to look for in leaving London to get down into the heart of Burnham. Nevertheless, it was a sort of home; and we were glad to see again the familiar features of the Odeon Platz and the Maximilien-Strasse.

The good Professor returned with a sigh to his labours and his domestic routine. His

homely wife kissed him dutifully, in a quiet, affectionate way, and then began to tell him, in an injured tone, of the interference of the Herren Polizei about something or other. The Professor listened meekly, and then suggested that we should have a little chocolate.

Lena was, for a wonder, gracious, Franz having brought her a very pretty brooch from Innsbruck. Instead of being impudent and coquettish, she was shy and demure ; and I think if Franz had taken advantage of her whim of complaisance to ask her for a tiny kiss, she would not have minded much.

‘You have been working hard, Mr. Frank?’ she asked.

‘We have all been working hard, Lena,’ returned her lover.

‘You will let me see your sketches, won’t you?’

Franz was overjoyed to find Lena caring

a pin-point about anything he did; and he promised not only to show her his sketches, but to finish up any she liked, and present them to her.

‘You have been very wicked in your letters since I went away, Lena,’ he said.

‘Why, then?’ she asked, elevating her eyebrows with a pretty look of wonder.

‘You know.’

‘I know I wrote to you; isn’t that enough? You should be glad to have my letters, even if there was nothing but nonsense in them.’

‘That is just what was in them.’

‘Oh, indeed!’

This with a pout.

‘If I only write nonsense, you shall have no more of it.’

Franz began to look apprehensive.

‘Lena! ——’

‘Oh, I can only talk nonsense. Very



well. But you like my nonsense, don't you, Herr Papakin ?'

With that she went and hung round the Herr Papa's neck, and toyed with his neckerchief.

'What is it, Lena ?'

'You will be my sweetheart, Papakin, and you won't mind my talking nonsense, will you? Travelling doesn't improve one's temper, does it, Papakin? and people think they have grown wise when they go abroad, and come back savage and intolerable. But you are always the same, Papakin, and I don't want anybody but you.'

Franz became angry. He did not like being talked at.

'Herr Professor,' said he, 'did you ever know a cat that stroked herself the wrong way in order to have an excuse for scratching you?'

'Oh, I am a cat,' said Lena, with a scorn-

ful toss of the small and pretty head. 'Mr. Frank, you will beg my pardon before I see you again.'

And so she left the room, leaving Franz the victim of a deadly remorse. It was all the work of a few careless words; and yet the mischief they had caused was sufficiently portentous to a lover.

'On the very day of our return, too!' he said. 'She is no better than a tigress or a Red Indian.'

Heatherleigh's letter had been sent to Munich instead of Innsbruck. It ran in this way:—

'Dear Ted,—Did you ever try to break the back of a woman's opinion, and find yourself thrashing the air? I think the most vexing thing for a man is to prove triumphantly to a woman that she ought not to believe so-and-so and so-and-so, and find, after all, that the impalpable thing he fancied

he had destroyed is as brisk and lively as ever. With a woman you don't care about, it doesn't matter. You leave her in her "invincible ignorance." But to find yourself baffled and tortured and vexed by this invisible, insignificant thing called an opinion, when the interests of one you love are concerned, is a grievous thing, not easily to be borne.

'At last I met Polly. I knew I should, sooner or later; for I watched for her whenever I had the time. It was yesterday forenoon, and I was going round by Gloucester Gate. She saw me at some distance off, and tried to avoid me; but that was of no use. When I went up and spoke to her, she was very much excited; and her excitement took the form of a prodigious freezing constraint, that made her look like a frightened, wild bird, lying still, but watching how to escape from your hand.

““Polly,” said I, “we didn’t use to meet like this?”

““It is all the greater pity we should meet like this now,” she said, hurriedly. “But it can’t be helped, Mr. Heatherleigh; and if you’ll be good enough——”

““To go away and leave you, Polly?” I said. “No; I don’t mean to do anything of the kind. And all this *can* be helped.”

“So I went on to tell her what nonsense her recent conduct had been; and how foolish she was to regard what my father had said. This was evidently a sore point with the poor girl; for, you may recollect, she was driven by her strong pride and indignation to take it for granted, without my mentioning her name, that it was she I meant to marry. No girl would like to be entrapped into such a confession, and with her I could see that the reflection was excessively painful. But then I urged upon her

the necessity of sinking all these considerations, every consideration except one—that here were we two, almost alone in London, and that the best thing we could do was to marry, and keep our own counsel, and let our exceedingly respected relatives, on both sides, pass such comments as their lively wit might suggest.

‘You may fancy this a very matter-of-fact way of putting it. But then I had to treat the sensitive malady of poor Polly in a somewhat heroic fashion, and assume a mastery that I did not feel. What were my sensations? Here was I—a man drawing on towards middle life, looking upon myself as a sort of widower, indeed—with few friends, with a liking for domestic quiet and comfort, and with a disposition sufficiently amiable, I hope, to keep on good terms with an affectionate companion; here was she, alone in London, unfriended, with nobody to

look to for assistance in case of need. Why shouldn't we two outcasts join our fortunes, and be stronger through mutual help? There never was a marriage more reasonable in point of circumstances; to say nothing of the affection that leads you to think any marriage reasonable.

‘All this and more I represented to her; and still found myself fighting with my invisible enemy of an opinion, or determination, or something of the kind that lay behind the unnatural hardness of her look and coldness of her voice. What was I to do? We had got round into the Park, by the trees above the canal; and there was scarcely anybody there at this hour of the forenoon. I preached, I prayed, I begged, all in vain. She was as obdurate as marble. She admitted all my arguments; and then merely said that what I asked was impossible, that she

and I never could marry, that we ought to separate then and for ever.

‘I made one more vexed endeavour to bring her to reason ; and then, that not succeeding, I think I was seized with a sort of madness—a long and happy future for both of us seemed to dance before my eyes—I caught her unawares, and, with a laugh that must have sounded like the laugh of a maniac, kissed her. She turned round, white and angry ; and then, seeing that I was laughing in desperation, all her resolve seemed gradually to break away, until at last she laughed too, in her old frank way, and held out both her hands.

“I cannot help myself, I suppose,” she said.

‘Was there ever a courtship like that, Ted, in the open air, in the forenoon, in Regent’s Park ? Now when I look back upon it, I ask myself if I was temporarily in-

sane : whether or no, the result remains, and we are both happy.

“ Now,” said I to Polly, “ let me show you that you have not agreed to marry a boy, who will neither know how to work for you, or master you in your sulky fits, or make you take good care of your health. I am about to become rich. I have a grand scheme to make our fortune, Polly.”

“ What is it ? ” she asked.

“ A company that shall produce something out of nothing, and alter the whole of our commercial relations with India and China. This company will contract to buy up on the Monday morning of each week all the sermons which have been preached on the preceding Sunday. From all parts of the kingdom the various MSS. must be sent in and collected in the works of the company at Millwall. That is the first step.”



““Yes,” she said, very much interested, apparently.

““These sermons are now taken and put into vast cauldrons, which are in communication with all the ordinary apparatus of a distillery. In fact, the sermons are to be distilled; and the product, which is to make our fortune, Polly, is——”

““What?” she asked.

““Opium.”

“She looked vexed.

““You have just done the most serious thing you ever did in your life, and you fall to joking already.”

““My dear,” said I, “I propose to have our engagement, and our married life, too, a prolonged joke. People make these things serious, because they grow afraid. We shall not grow afraid, you and I; and we will carry on the joke from day to day, until, when we have grown old and white-haired

we shall look back and see that we have spent life pleasantly and enjoyed it rationally. They will tell you it is very wrong to talk confidently about coming happiness, and to be so sure that life is going to be pleasant ; but isn't it better than to be continually foreboding evil and making yourself wretched by anticipation ? If the evil must come, let it : we shan't whimper like children, Polly. In the meantime you and I will take such enjoyment and comfort as we can get ; for we shall never be twice young."

' You, Ted, know what I think about such things ; but I preached in this fashion to give my poor, trembling Polly a little courage. She looked happy and comfortable in a quiet, timorous way ; and seemed to have grown all at once trustful and docile and affectionate. Immediately, too, she instituted a sort of right of property in me, and timidly begged of me to promise never to go

out any more at night with my throat bare—a thing she used always to protest against. Her remembrance of it just at this moment made me laugh heartily, and she looked a little self-conscious and shy, as if I had taken advantage of her confidence. There was something so odd in the notion that there was now a little woman to see that I must not catch cold or otherwise harm myself, that I felt myself vastly exalted in my own estimation, and ready to look down with a wonderful compassion on you poor fellows who are fighting the world all by yourselves.

‘Do I rave? Am I sane? I scarcely know. Your mother tries to make the affair wear a serious aspect, and fails wholly. I cannot get frightened at the notion of taking a house. A parish-clerk is not an awful creature to me, as he ought to be. The cares of furniture sit lightly upon me; for I

know that Polly and I won't break our hearts if a saucepan is wanting, or there happen to be no salt-spoons with the breakfast-service. I have no heavy sense of responsibility whatever; and I ask myself whether my want of anxiety is a proof that I am not fitted to encounter the solemnities of a married life. Grey hairs will come soon enough, Ted; and I don't look out for them every morning in the glass.'

The rest of the letter contained lots of gossip about our old companions in the neighbourhood of Fitzroy Square, and their doings. But through all the letter there breathed the same audacious trust and gladness that showed how Heatherleigh's life had been stirred by these new experiences. Yet even in his joy there was the same wise and kindly spirit that had drawn me towards him in his indolent bachelor-days.

Two days later came a letter from Polly

herself. She hinted timidly that Mr. Heatherleigh had told me what had occurred; and then began to talk of other things in a practical, constrained sort of fashion. But again and again she returned inadvertently to Heatherleigh, and his doings and prospects, and spoke of him with a pride which she did her best to conceal. Polly used to have a pretty correct notion of Heatherleigh's capacity as an artist—indeed he had frankly told her the limits within which he knew he should always work; but now all these things were changed. Mr. Heatherleigh was to wake up from his indolence and do something great. The public were getting tired of the commonplace work of many of the R. A.'s; it was necessary that the august body should get some new blood into it. And Polly enclosed me a cutting from a newspaper, in which a picture of Heatherleigh's was praised in unequivocal terms.

When was I coming home? she asked. I was wanted to make up again the little Bohemian supper parties that were so comfortable and jolly in the old days. I translated these words into a wish on the part of Polly that I should see her in the full honour and joy of her new position, and that I might share some of her superabundant happiness.

Polly wrote this letter in French, and wrote it very well. But I suspected that she would soon be giving up her French dictionary for a cookery-book; and she added that she had already ceased to sit any more for her artist-friends.

In the meantime there was little chance of my congratulating in person these two who had, in spite of the world and the devil, achieved some measure of happiness amid the discordant interests of life. I feared to go to England. Should I not meet there with the old hopeless feeling, and know that

Hester Burnham was as far removed from me as a star might be? Here she was nearer to me. In England I should find her about to marry her pale-faced cousin, with the mean heart and the cold eyes; here I grew bold, and believed such a thing impossible.

So I turned with diligent labour to the picture of Wölundur and the king's daughter in the lonely northern island; and as I worked at it, on those days which were not devoted to class-studies, I knew that she would see it, in some far-off time. So the months passed, and the new year came in, and the spring-time, and there was a breath of primroses and sweet violets in the air that seemed to speak of the green hedges and the leafy woods of Burnham.

## CHAPTER IX.

## AT BURNHAM GATES.

MY PRIVATE studio was my bed-room, and it looked out upon the Königin-Strasse, and the trees of the 'English garden.' While the trees were leafless, and even now when they showed only the young leaves of the spring, you could look over the park-like meadows that lie within the garden, and you could see the few people who occasionally strolled across this open space to the paths under the chestnuts and limes. It was here, somehow or other, that I felt convinced I should see Hester Burnham. Many and many a time I have looked out of the small window, with almost a definite anticipation of behold-



ing the figure and the dress I knew so well coming out from under the trees. Many a time have I started to observe in the distance some lady who might be she, and wait with a strange, joyous wonder to see whether the figure would approach with that dainty and queenly gait which was peculiar to her of all the women in the world. The successive disappearance of these possibilities was scarcely a disappointment, and was certainly not a misery ; for I got to connect the English garden with her so completely that it looked like a bit of friendly Buckinghamshire that had wandered into this foreign land.

Spring came upon us suddenly. One morning I awoke to find a new freshness in the air—a mild, warm gratefulness that seemed filled with the perfume of opening buds. As it happened, Franz and I were invited on that day to be introduced to

Fräulein Riedel, that young lady having graciously signified to her lover that she should like to see the two friends of whom he frequently spoke.

We were to meet Silber and her in the Neue Anlagen, just under Haidhausen ; and here it was, among the leafy labyrinths of the pleasure-ground, that we encountered the happy pair. The little actress, with the shining black eyes and hair, received us without any show of embarrassment, such as sat upon the concerned and delighted and stupid face of her companion. She walked on with us, and immediately began, in a matter-of-fact way, to ask whether it was difficult to learn English thoroughly, and whether they paid actresses well in England.

‘ But you don’t need to learn English thoroughly, Fräulein,’ I told her, ‘ to appear on an English stage. We like a marked foreign pronunciation, because it harmonizes

with the origin and character of our plays. As to salary, I don't know much about that ; but a great many of our actresses wear most expensive jewels, on the stage and off.'

' Do you always have your operettas translated into English ? '

' Generally.'

' What do they pay the principal lady ? '

The tone of this conversation did not seem to please poor Silber. He endeavoured to divert her attention from such mercenary matters ; but she kept firmly to her point, and showed herself a thorough little woman of business. Perhaps Silber was the more annoyed because her talk evidently left him outside of all her plans of the future. She seemed to say that there could be no question of marriage between a not over-rich student and this brisk young actress, who had an eye to lucrative engagements in England.

At length, we bade them good-bye ; and

received, on parting, a kindly invitation to take tea with the Fräulein and her mamma some day on the following week. Franz and I went off towards Brunnthal, and then crossed the Isar and went up by Ludwig's-Walzmühle. The air, as I said, had grown suddenly sweet with the promise of the spring; and there seemed to be a joyous, stirring life in the trees and in the warm, moist ground. I knew what Burnham would be like then; and I could see the green valley before my eyes steeped in the clear spring sunshine.

‘Franz,’ said I, ‘will you start with me at six o’clock for England? We shall travel day and night; then I will show you an English valley in spring-time, that is finer than anything you ever read of in an Eastern story; and we shall come straight back again, without anybody in England knowing anything about it?’

‘You take my breath away—England—

six o'clock this evening—and the expense——'

'I invite you to go as my guest. I have become rich to-day. A gentleman in England has heard of this Wölundur picture from the Professor, and I had a letter this morning from him, offering a handsome sum for it. Shall we go at six o'clock, and be back in a week?'

'I have nothing ready for such a journey.'

'Why, an old traveller like you should be able to pack up in ten minutes for a voyage to Lebanon.'

We walked back to the town. I got him to have some dinner at the 'Four Seasons,' and this gave him courage. We went over to the Königin-Strasse, and bade good-bye to the Professor and his family.

'Why do you look afraid, Linele?' said Franz. 'It is only a bit of fun. We shall be back in two or three days.'

‘You may be drowned,’ said Lena, with tender and troubled eyes.

‘Do you know why we are going? Listen!’ said Franz, and he whispered something into Lena’s ear.

Lena looked at me, and smiled, and nodded.

‘Then I will let you go,’ she said to Franz. ‘Leb’ wohl! Don’t be longer than a week, Franz. Ade!’

We started at six. By eleven next morning we were in Cologne. Thence a rapid journey brought us over Brussels to Calais; and at length I heard a fine round English oath, that told me I was in my native land.

We went to the Langham Hotel when we arrived in London, and there Franz speedily became familiar with all the waiters who could speak German.

‘I have brought you here,’ I said, ‘that you may study American manners and cus-

toms, without going to America. Breakfast and dine for a day or two in that big room with the pillars, and you may save yourself the expense of a trip to New York.'

'These are not English, then—these pretty girls, with the French fashions, who talk loudly across the table, and have at sixteen the manner of a woman of thirty?'

'You will soon see the difference. Perhaps you will prefer the American type.'

'If they are all as pretty as these girls, I shall have no choice. Surely we have made a mistake, and come to Sachsen, *wo die schönen Mädchen wachsen*. But the Leipsic and Dresden girls are fair.'

We spent a day in London, hiring a hansom for the entire time, and driving about to such places as Franz wished to see. London, I think, was as new and delightful to me as to him. It was so pleasant an experience to be able to understand everything

that everybody said, without having to listen particularly ; and it was pleasant, also, to feel an easy familiarity with the customs of the place, even while the very streets, that were once so well-known, seemed to have assumed an oddly unaccustomed appearance. Then, on the following day, we got on the top of the Buckinghamshire coach, and drove away from the city bustle and noise.

I was proud of my native county when we saw it, then in all its spring greenery. The young hawthorn was out in the hedges, the chestnut-buds were bursting, the elms were sprinkled over with leaves ; and the windy clouds that crossed the blue spring sky gave to the far-off woods and hills a constant motion of shadow and sunlight that created landscapes at every step. We drove down through the old-fashioned villages—Chalfont, with its stream crossing the main road ; Amersham, with its broad street and twin



rows of quaint, old, red-brick houses; Missenden, with its ancient abbey, and church high up on the hill; and then we found ourselves in the valley that looks up to Burnham.

I took Franz up and over the chalk-hills, and through the woods that were now growing rich with flowers. These were a wonder to him—the wildernesses of wild hyacinth, a lambent blue; the pale, blush-tinted anemone, the pink-veined wood-sorrel, the tiny moschatel, the dark dog's-mercury, the golden celandine; and everywhere the perfume of the sweet violet, clustered among its heart-shaped leaves, along the rabbit-banks and around the roots of the trees. The constant animal life, also—the ruddy squirrel running up the straight stem of a young beech, the disappearance of a rabbit into the brambles of a chalk-dell, the silent flight of a hare across the broad fields to some distant place of safety, the sudden whirr of a cock-

pheasant, and the incessant screaming of jays; while all around were the busy tomtits, and thrushes, and blackbirds, with a glimpse of a golden-crested wren hopping from bush to bush, or of a kestrel hanging high up in the blue, his wings motionless. Over all these, again, the light and motion of a breezy English sky, with cumulus-masses of white cloud that chased the sunlight over the Burnham woods, or hid the distant horizon in dark lines of an intense purple.

‘That is the house you have told me about,’ said Franz, as we descended into the valley again, and drew near Burnham. ‘I recognise it. How fine it looks, with the great avenue, and the trees! You said a young lady owned it—who is she?’

I heard the cantering of two horses on the road behind me, and turned.

‘Franz!’ I cried, ‘jump into the wood here: she must not see us!’

It was too late. She came along at a good pace on a handsome small horse, followed by old Pritchett on the black cob I had ridden many a time. I pulled my slouched hat over my face; with our heavy German travelling-cloaks it was not likely she would suspect either of us of being English. As she passed, I was aware that she looked at us somewhat curiously; and then she went on. I could look at her with safety as she rode up the soft, elastic turf of the avenue. I saw her once more!—with the clear, white spring sunlight on her cheek, and on her brown hair, that the wind lifted and flung about her neck and shoulders. I knew she was there; and yet it seemed I was scarcely more aware of her presence than if it had been a dream. For I had been accustomed to see her in dreams with such a vividness that now, in actual life, she scarcely seemed more real.

And was not this a dream ? Our rapid flight from Germany had been so sudden that now I almost feared to turn my eyes, lest I should awake and find myself among the white houses of Munich. Yet surely this was a thoroughly English scene before me—the grand old house, silent amid its great trees, and the young English girl riding up to it, under that windy English sky. You might have fancied it was in the sixteenth century, all this picture ; and that presently the gay young lover would appear, singing—

Now, Robin, lend to me thy bow,  
Sweet Robin, lend to me thy bow ;  
For I must now a hunting with my lady go,  
With my sweet lady go !

‘ I am right ! ’ exclaimed Franz, suddenly.  
‘ I *have* seen her before ; it is the face hanging up in your room, in the Professor’s house.’

‘There is nothing to wonder at, is there?’  
I asked. ‘I have seen this lady several times—I have spoken to her——’

‘And why don’t you now go up to the house, and renew your acquaintance with her?’

‘Because we are in England, Franz.’

So we stood at the white gate and looked up towards Burnham; and I could not go away. When should I ever see it again, and all the trees that I knew? As we lingered there, some one came riding down the avenue. It was Pritchett. I knew the old man could not possibly recognize me, so I still remained there; but when he came down to the gate, he pulled up the cob, and said,—

‘Beg your pahrdon, gentlemen, but you be furreigners, bain’t ye?’

‘Yes,’ I said, ‘we have just come from Germany.’

‘Ah, that wur what she said,’ he muttered to himself. ‘Miss Burnham’s compliments, and if so be as you’d like to go over the house and look at the pictures, you may.’

‘Will you say to Miss Burnham that we are very much obliged to her, but that we could not think of intruding upon her, since the family is at home?’

‘Lor bless ye, the family is only——’

‘Herself’ he was nearly saying, but probably thinking that such an admission would lessen the grandeur of Burnham in the eyes of the foreigners, he muttered something about our being welcome, if we chose to visit the house, and then rode off.

I translated all this to Franz.

‘Such complaisance to foreigners is quite remarkable,’ he said. ‘You have no right, I think, to speak of English pride, stiffness, title-worship, and what not, when a grand lady like that goes out of her way to be

civil to two wandering German students, whom she finds hanging about her gates.'

'But one swallow does not make a summer, Franz.'

So we turned away.

'Where are we going now?' said Franz.

'Anywhere you like. If you would rather stay a few days longer in England, and see some of our shipping-towns, I will go with you with pleasure.'

'That means,' said Franz, with deliberation, 'that you came over all the way from Munich to England just to catch one glimpse of that girl's face. Perhaps you will now deny that you are in love with her?'

'Deny it? Oh no. That is the very joke of the position, that I am in love with her. Don't you see what a merry jest it is?'

'I see that you don't laugh much over it,' said Franz, bluntly.

‘Perhaps not; a few days ago in Germany, I fancied that I should marry that lady some day. It is a possibility that has hung before me for a long time. Now I see it is no longer a possibility. I was dreaming in Germany: a breath of our English air has woke me out of the trance.’

‘But why? but why?’ said Franz.

‘You are a German, and you cannot understand it. One of our statesmen has said that there are two nations in England—the rich and the poor; she belongs to the one, I to the other; and in England for a lady of her position to forget herself, and what is due to her friends——Bah! why speak any more of it?’

‘My dear friend,’ said Franz, ‘I don’t think you can express yourself properly in German yet; for I cannot make any sense out of what you say. You seem to forget



the dignity of love, and of art. If the girl is worth loving, she will know that any woman, if she had twenty castles, might be proud to marry a true artist. She will think more of him as he sits with an old coat and oil-stained cuffs before his easel, than of a young dandy smelling like a civet-cat and encrusted with rings, who comes to pay compliments out of an empty brain to her. Suppose she had twenty dozen such castles, she ought to feel proud and honoured by having gained the love of a man who may make the next centuries enquire curiously about her and speak kindly of her for his sake.'

'German, all German, my dear Franz,' I said. 'Translate that into English, and it will become mere bathos.'

'To the devil, then, with your beast of a language!' exclaimed Franz. 'I should have thought, when you borrowed your

speech from all the nations in Europe, you might have got as much as would let you talk common-sense. I was studying your language while you were looking over the gates up to the big house. I found the *mélange* almost intelligible. There was *furniture*, which was French; there was "mansion," from the Latin '*mansio*' I suppose; there was "park," which is merely our German "*park*;" there was "*timber*," which is an old Icelandic, and Danish, and——'

'What are you talking about? "Mansion," "park" "timber"—where did you see all this?'

'As I tell you, while you were looking up at the house. There are two large bills on the gates.'

'On the Burnham gates?'

'Yes.'

We had not gone far on our return-jour-

ney ; so we walked back again to see what these bills were. As I had suspected, they were the ordinary advertisements of a firm of auctioneers.

‘ Burnham is for sale,’ I said to Franz.

‘ So the lady took us for two probable purchasers,’ remarked Franz, ruefully. ‘ That explains her complaisance.’

‘ Do we look like probable purchasers of a house like that ? ’

Yes, after all these years, Burnham and the old family were to be separated ; and the girl who was the last of the race was to be turned out into the world, a wanderer. Here, now, was a splendid opportunity for the hero and lover to step in, buy up the place, and lay it as a gift at his mistress’s feet. Among all the young men of England, rich and able to do such a thing, was there not one who would come forward in this romantic fashion,

and show that love was not quite gone from among us?

I ought to have been selfishly glad that this catastrophe had brought Hester Burnham so much the nearer to me. But I had been born and bred under the shadow of the antiquity of Burnham, and it seemed to me pitiable that the family should lose its high estate and be cast out among strangers.

We stopped that night at the Red Lion in Missenden, and we found all the talk was about the sale of Burnham. I succeeded in preserving my incognito, and listened to all the rumours and stories which were circulated without restraint about the matter.

‘I’m not for sayin’,’ remarked one old gentleman, who sat in a corner of the parlour, and smoked a long clay—‘I’m not for sayin’ as anybody’s in the wrong.’

‘I side with you, Muster Clump,’ remarked

another, 'but I thinks as it wur a pity Miss Hester should ha' been sent to France. Folks don't stick to the good old English way o' livin' when they come back from France; and though I wouldn't say as it was Miss Hester's doin', I hold as it wur a pity she should ha' been sent to France.'

'It wur none o' her doin',' said a third, decisively, 'I'll stake my life on't; and I doan't see as any mahn has the right to blame things on France as he doesn't understand.'

'Ah, you're a wise mahn, Muster Blaydon,' retorted the other, with a sneer, 'and so you wur when your good missus axed ye about them pigs o' Mr. Toomer's.'

Here there was a subdued laugh all round; and Mr. Blaydon looked disposed to rise and settle the question summarily with his opponent.

'I bain't a dog chasin' of his own tail, least-

ways, and thinkin' as he's makin' folks laugh, I hold by it as it wur none o' her doin'; and them as talks about France had better show as they've been there by their manners.'

'There be more nor Miss Hester in the family,' observed the first speaker, sagaciously nodding his head.

'Ah, that there be!' repeated Mr. Blaydon, triumphantly. 'There be more nor her, Muster Clump; and it don't seem to me likely as a young lady like that has been meddlin' wi' them lawyers, and gettin' the place into debt. I say wi' you, Muster Clump, there's more o' the name than her; and no mahn will make me believe as it is her fault. Talk o' France! Pah!'

'I'm not goin' to reason wi' any mahn as runs his head agin a stone wall, like a mad bull,' remarked the second speaker, with slow virulence; 'but what I say is as other folks in the country 'ave stayed at 'ome all their

lives, and made theirsels comfortabler and richer than they wur afore, and as it is a suspicious cirkmstance—I say, a suspicious cirkmstance—as them as has gone to France 'ave come back and found they wur obliged to sell out. I don't reason wi' no mahn. But I see things as lies afore my nose, and I'm no blinder than my neighbours.'

'And who is to have the old place, gentlemen?' said the landlord.

'Most like a linen-draper fro' Lunnon,' remarked Mr. Clump, contemptuously, 'as 'll paint the 'ouse spick and span new, and put up boards agin' trespassers—as 'll go out shootin', and hit the dogs instead o' the birds, and pay nothin' to the 'unt——'

'And kill the foxes,' said one.

'And contract wi' all the Lunnon tradesmen for what he wants, to save twopence off the pound o' tea.'

'Yes, Muster Blaydon,' said Mr. Clump,

‘there’s a goodish many o’ the gentry as doan’t know their dooty—leastways they doan’t do it—to the place where they wur born and bred. They mun send to Lunnon for hevery-think—even if they want peppermints for church o’ Sundays; howiver fur away they be; and all to be in the fashion, and forgettin’ as the people around them ’ave rents to pay, and don’t grumble when their corn’s trodden down by the ’unt. I will say this, as Miss Hester wur good in that way to the folks in this here place; and it’s my belief as there’ll be a difference when the new howner comes in.’

This, indeed, seemed to be the general impression; and there was scarcely one of them there who had not some kindly act to speak of on the part of Hester Burnham.

As I looked along the valley next morning, it seemed to me that Burnham was about to undergo a great transformation, and be henceforth strange and unfamiliar.



## CHAPTER X.

## THE DROPPED GLOVE.

ON the following afternoon, Franz and I were seated at one of the bow-windows of the Langham smoking-room, looking at the people who were driving down Portland Place towards Regent Street, in every description of carriage. Now it was a Cabinet Minister, looking austere and unconscious of the notice he was attracting; now it was a young and pretty *prima-donna*, gaily chatting to her husband, and confounding the current rumours about her conjugal unhappiness; now it was a well-known peeress, who had just been attending a meeting of some charitable society; and again it was

some poor young girl who had at first figured in a casino, and then been petted, and photographed, and made much of, until she had come out as a fine lady, and was now coating the primal simplicity of her face with violet-powder, and wearing hired jewels, and looking hard, and worn, and sad under her new-found wealth and fame.

‘Ah, look!’ exclaimed Franz, suddenly, ‘who is that lady with the yellow hair?’

I caught sight of a mail phaeton just turning the corner. The driver, I saw at a glance, was Mr. Morell; and the lady on his left, whose yellow hair had attracted Franz’s attention, was no other than Bonnie Lesley.

‘That is a lady I have often spoken to you about,’ I said. ‘They didn’t look in here, did they?’

‘Not that I saw,’ said Franz.

We went to the theatre that evening.

When we returned there was a message awaiting us to say that two gentlemen had called, and would call some time later.

Towards twelve we were again in the smoking-room, when Mr. Morell, in full evening-dress, and Heatherleigh, in his ordinary rough-and-ready costume, appeared at the door.

‘Ha, ha!’ said Morell, ‘if you didn’t see us, we saw you. And now you must explain——’

‘We did see you,’ I said, ‘and you have more to explain than we have.’

‘Don’t you know, then?’ he asked with some surprise.

‘What?’

‘You did not get a letter from Miss Lesley within the past two or three days?’

‘Not very likely, since we left Munich nearly a week ago. Let me introduce my

friend, and will you be good enough to talk French ? ’

‘ If I can,’ said Morell.

When the introduction had taken place, Heatherleigh explained (allowing Morell to assume a bashfulness which he possessed not) that Bonnie Lesley had written to tell me of her approaching marriage.

‘ And this is the happy man,’ he said, putting his hand on Morell’s shoulder. ‘ And he has shown his gratitude and good spirits by writing the wickedest reviews he could think of for several weeks past. When he is in a good humour, he revels in butchery. The other night I went up to his chambers, and found that he had just reviewed several books, which were lying on the table. So soon as he saw me, he rang for his servant to remove the carcasses, and went into his bed-room to wash his hands.’

‘ You might take a lesson from me, Hea-

therleigh,' he retorted, 'and keep your sarcasm for people whom you *don't* know.'

'I wish you all manner of joy,' I said, 'and I must write to Miss Lesley to explain why I did not answer her letter directly.'

'Then you don't know anything it contained?' Morell said. 'You don't know that Burnham was to be sold?'

'Yes, I knew that. I have seen the announcement.'

'Perhaps you know the latest news about it?'

'No.'

'There seems a chance of the sale being indefinitely postponed. Only, the house must be let; and I suppose Miss Burnham will live abroad.'

'Abroad?'

'I suppose so. I am sorry Miss Lesley is not a blood-relation of that young lady, or I might have the right to administer to

Mr. Alfred Burnham a kicking which he much needs. Ah, you don't know anything about it, do you? *Mon brave garçon*, get me something to drink, and, in the words of the drama, I will tell you all.'

It was a very pretty story he told me—one with which it is unnecessary to soil these pages. The results of it have already been indicated.

'I will confess,' said Heatherleigh, 'that I did the old Colonel an injustice. I thought his appearance of simplicity, and his austere and proper conduct, were only a bit of the play, in which he was acting in concert with his son. But it seems clear that the Colonel has come worse off than anybody.'

'No, my dear boy,' replied Morell, quietly, 'the Colonel did not come worst off: for he had nothing to lose. I tried him, before his son did.'

'You are modest,' said Heatherleigh.

‘No, I am repentant. Those days are over. I borrow no more. I am about to become an exemplary husband and citizen; give up all my clubs except one; smoke cigars at thirty shillings; nurse the baby; and pay water-rates. Nevertheless, I *will* ask you for a good cigar, my dear Ives; for the days of renunciation are not yet come.’

‘And where is Alfred Burnham?’ I asked.

‘That,’ remarked Morell, ‘is a solemn question.’

‘And the answer is worth money,’ added Heatherleigh. ‘If the demand for the gentleman were at all indicative of his value, one might say that Alfred Burnham was somebody worth knowing. But you have not told us yet what brought you over here just now?’

‘You must ask my friend.’

‘I think,’ said Franz, speaking in very Teutonic French, ‘that we came from

Munich to England to look over a white gate at a house, and then go back again.'

'Was the house called Burnham House, Monsieur Vogl?' asked Heatherleigh.

'I believe it was, sir.'

'Then I knew of one man who might have done such a thing; but I did not fancy that Europe held two.'

'Be satisfied with the discovery,' I said, 'and let us talk of something else. I suppose my mother is well; and her young companion, is she also well?'

'Yes,' said Heatherleigh, hastily, 'they are both well, as you know. But what do you intend doing? What do you mean by living at an hotel when you might be at home?'

'Because we did not wish it to be known that we were in England. We only came over for a day or two, that my friend might have a look at our English wild-flowers in the spring sunshine; and we intended run-



ning back immediately. But now I suppose we may as well see everybody properly, and in as little time as possible, and then go back.'

This, in effect, was what was forced upon us by our being discovered. We still remained at the Langham, for convenience' sake; but we spent most of our time in hurriedly visiting people between the hours of Franz's sight-seeing. Polly was overjoyed to show herself off as an expectant bride; and yet you could not help being charmed by the odd mixture of humour and frank jollity which accompanied her evident self-satisfaction. My mother, too, seemed to look upon the match as greatly the result of her care in educating Polly; and took every pains to show off the accomplishments which Polly modestly tried to conceal.

Bonnie Lesley I saw twice. On our first meeting, she began the history of her engage-

ment with Mr. Morell in a deprecatory sort of way, as if she felt it necessary to excuse herself to me. I fancied I detected a touch of chagrin in her tone when she saw that I scarcely understood this effort on her part, and was certainly in no great anxiety to remove scruples which I could not comprehend. This odd feeling soon wore off, as she grew confidential in the old fashion; and at last she got to state the relations on which she stood with her intended husband with a candour which would have surprised any one who did not know her as well as I did.

‘I think Mr. Heatherleigh was right,’ she said, carelessly and with much apparent self-satisfaction. ‘I am not capable of a grand passion—I wish I was; but you can’t make yourself do these things; and it is perhaps as well, for it might make one very unhappy. I like Mr. Morell very well. He is good-

tempered and clever; he admires me, I know, and thinks I will preside properly at his dinner-table; and that I know I shall do. We get on remarkably well together, and I think we shall be very happy.'

'I certainly hope so.'

'You may say there is not much romance in all that. But I scarcely see anybody who is romantic around me; and I think we shall be very much like other people. It is *not* a mercenary marriage, either; for he makes only a moderate income, and what I have is no great inducement to a man moving in such circles as he knows. He has expectations, certainly; and I hope we shall be able to meet our friends on equal terms, and not have to be stingy.'

Bonnie Lesley had grown much more matter-of-fact in tone since I had first known her, and there was less of pretty wonder in her eyes.

She added, after a pause—

‘ You see, it is not what you would call a love-match, nor is it a marriage made up for money. It is simply two people who think they can get on comfortably in each other’s society, who like each other, and hope to continue to like each other. Upon my word, I think most people marry like that. These wonderful love-affairs only happen between boys and girls, and they never come to anything ; for the boy can’t marry just then, and the girl ages more rapidly than he, and finds she can’t wait for him, and marries somebody else.’

‘ And he has a broken heart for a few weeks, and then turns to his business or profession, and gets older and wiser and marries a woman much better suited to him in every way, and leads an ordinarily happy life. Didn’t you try to give me the first part of that experience ? ’

‘Now, that *is* unkind,’ she said, ‘after I told you I was so sorry, and you agreed to forget it.’

‘I revived it only to tell you how near you were succeeding.’

‘Was I, indeed?’ she said, with a pleased surprise. ‘Were you very near falling wildly in love with me?’

‘Very near, I think—until, one day, while I was sitting beside you, I looked up and saw a face that I knew, in an instant, I had loved all along, without scarcely knowing it.’

‘I know what you mean,’ she said, ‘and your manner was changed to me ever after that day.’

Presently she added in another tone—

‘I suppose Mr. Heatherleigh will rather laugh at our marriage, and say it is an ordinary social bargain, or something like that.’

‘I don’t think he will do anything of the kind. Won’t you tell me now why you constantly fancy he is saying ill-natured things of you, and putting the worst possible construction on everything you do?’

But she would not tell, nor would Heatherleigh ever breathe a word upon the subject; and it was only by hap-hazard, some eighteen months thereafter, that I was enabled to unravel the mystery. A little fit of very uncalled-for jealousy on the part of Polly was the means of letting me into the secret. From the moment that Polly saw herself the future wife of the man whom of all others she most admired and worshipped, I fancy she was rather given to grudging him his acquaintance with fine folks, and, above all, with fine young ladies. The weakness was a natural one, but Polly knew it was a weakness, and laboured to get rid of it;

nevertheless she occasionally exhibited little fits of envious depreciation of those who, she fancied, were attracting too much of her husband's attention. Among these she placed Bonnie Lesley, and seemed to dislike that young lady more, I am certain, than circumstances warranted.

‘Heatherleigh never liked Bonnie Lesley, you may take my word for it,’ I said to Polly, after both she and Bonnie Lesley were married.

‘I know it,’ she said, sharply ; ‘for she proposed to him, and he refused her, and she hated him ever after, because he told a mutual friend that she was born without a soul. There!’ she added, breaking into a humorous laugh, ‘I have told you the secret: but I could not help it. Though I think, after that, he ought to have stayed away from the Lewison’s and never seen Bonnie Lesley again, that she might forget it.’

‘I have no doubt he went there that she might learn to think it of no consequence, and so forget it.’

Franz and I remained for yet a few days in England, in order to pay a flying visit to the Cumberland lakes, with which my friend was enchanted. It was perhaps a cruel thing to show that piece of scenery to a man who was going back to Munich.

On the day preceding our departure we were to go up to the Lewisons’ to bid them and Miss Lesley good-bye. We went, by appointment, in the morning. Shortly after we arrived, Mr. Lewison, having to go into the city, left; and Mrs. Lewison taking Franz to show him her husband’s collection of pictures, I was left alone with Bonnie Lesley.

‘What do you think of all that I told you the other day?’ she asked. ‘What do you think of my marriage?’



‘I think that you and Mr. Morell will get on very well together; for I fancy you will take pretty much the same views of most things.’

‘Now that is just it,’ she said. ‘Don’t you think we should be running a great risk if either of us was nursing a grand romantic passion? Haven’t you seen two people married, the one of them very practical, sensible, and matter-of-fact; the other very romantic, and very miserable because he or she can’t get the other to be responsive to the sentiment.’

‘There is no use in saying “he or she,”’ I said. ‘In such a case, it is always the man who is romantically fond of his wife, and the wife who is matter-of-fact.’

‘Did you ever see two people married, who were both capable of a grand romantic passion, you know—of heroic sentiment, and picturesque resolves? How would two such

people condescend to be bothered by ordinary company? Wouldn't they always be wanting to be in a boat, in the moonlight ; even although she had a house to look after, and he had——'

The door opened, and Mrs. Lewison and Franz appeared. There was a third figure ; and there was something in the look of Bonnie Lesley's face that told me who it was. I knew that the figure was small and dressed in black, and then I turned and looked up, and found the beautiful eyes of Kilmeny there.

What did they say? There was merely an embarrassed surprise in them ; and I saw that the meeting, which had been planned by Bonnie Lesley, was as unexpected by Hester Burnham as it had been by me.

She came forward.

'You will forgive me for not recognising you the other day,' she said, in her gentle,

honest way. 'But why did you not bring your friend up to the house?'

It was impossible, looking at those eyes, to make any sham excuse: she knew why I had avoided seeing her.

'It would have interested him, I dare say; and I suppose he has already told you how much he was delighted with the valley, and all the scenery there, and Burnham?'

'I never knew how pretty the place was until now,' she said; and her eyes were wistful and far away.

'Now, young people,' said Mrs. Lewison, 'I can't let you go down to this picture-exhibition without taking some lunch first.'

'But you are coming, are you not, Mrs. Lewison?' I asked.

'Hester will take my place, and look after you all, and bring you back safely. She is already well acquainted with all the mysterious duties of the chaperone and the house-

keeper, and is, indeed, the oldest young person I know. Are you not, Hester?’

‘A chaperone has only one duty,’ said Miss Lesley, ‘and that is to get out of the way, or fall asleep, at times ; and Hester is always in the way, and never sleeps. She is like a dormouse that lies curled up and small and warm, and all the time is peeping at you with two small bright eyes.’

‘But then, my dear,’ said Mrs. Lewison, ‘it can be of no consequence to you, now, whether your chaperone sleeps or not.’

‘You mean it can be of no consequence to Mr. ——’

But Bonnie Lesley stopped, and laughed, and blushed ; and Mr. Morell’s name was not mentioned.

It was finally arranged that the young ladies should get ready to go out while luncheon was being prepared ; and so it was that Franz and I were left alone.

‘This is terrible,’ said he. ‘I do not know how to take lunch with your English ladies. I shal commit a thousand *gaucheries*.’

‘Nonsense ! Only, don’t cut up your meat in small pieces to start with, and don’t put your knife to your mouth, and don’t praise anything unless you’re asked. That is all.’

Franz did not enjoy his lunch. In the first place, French was a tribulation to him. Then he never dared touch anything, or use any knife, spoon, or fork, until he had seen some one else do so. But he acquitted himself perfectly ; and, in due time, we were in the old, familiar, dark-green brougham, and driving rapidly down towards Pall Mall.

It was an exhibition of water-colours that we had arranged to visit. But the exhibition had been open for a long time ; and, on this particular morning, there was not a human being in the place, except an old and benevolent-looking gentleman, with white hair,

who sat at a table placed in the middle of the room, and calmly read the morning's news. The long room was warm and hushed; the only sound the occasional dropping of a bit of cinder from the grate. The thick carpets dulled your footsteps as you walked across; and there was something in the close, still atmosphere which tempted you, for no particular reason, to talk in a whisper. I wondered that the elderly gentleman who presided over the catalogues had not fallen asleep.

Then we walked straight into dreamland; and found ourselves in all manner of wonderful places—now looking down into some Welsh glen, or fronting the great bridge and the broad stream and the lofty Hradschin of Prague, the city of all cities that I love the most. We had only to move a few inches in order to whisk ourselves across a continent. A slight inclination of the head, and

we changed a grey and windy morning into a calm and yellow evening. Here were bits of sea off the Essex coast, cold and pale, and studded with the black hulls of smacks; and here were sunny glimpses of the white houses and green vines of Capri; and here were stretches of dark Scotch moors, lonely and bleak; and warm sunsets down among the Surrey hills; and snow-scenes in the icy wilds of Russia. All these things I saw reflected in Kilmeny's eyes; and I fancied that her face caught a glow from the sunsets, and that the windy coast-scenes seemed to bring a tinge of heightened colour to her cheek. We two had wandered up to the top of the room by ourselves, to look at a picture that was marked in the catalogue as 'Sunset in the Ober-Inn-Thal.' This picture was not the grandest performance one could have wished. It was melodramatic in conception, and pretentious in style; yet it was ex-

ceedingly like the great valley that stretches along to Innsbruck, and it gave an excellent notion of the intense quiet and solitariness of the place. The sun was down, and while the peaks of the lime-stone mountains stood bare and red in the pale green sky, down in the valley there lay cold mists, with a few orange points gleaming through the dusk, where a village lay in the valley. There was no other sign of life; everything was as motionless and still as the thin white crescent of the moon that was faintly visible in the glow of the sunset.

‘You have just been there,’ she said.

‘Yes. We walked all down the valley, by the road you see there; and it was as still and quiet as you see it, for we came along there in the evening. Don’t you think it is a very beautiful valley?’

We had both sat down, opposite the picture, and behind a centre-screen which stood



in the middle of the floor. So still was the place, and so completely did this temporary partition cut us off even from our two companions, that it was almost possible to imagine that we were really in the Ober-Inn-Thal, under the pale sunset. The eyes of Kilmeny were full of that sunset. They had the strange, dream-like, distant look that I had often noticed in them—when, if you spoke to her, she seemed to have to recall herself from a trance before she could answer.

‘I wish that we two could be there now,’ I said to her.

I had grown so bold, you see ; for it was as if I were talking in a dream, and as if she were far away from me and could hardly hear.

‘If you and I could be down there, in that valley, away from England,’ I said—and I scarcely knew that I was anxious and suppli

cating as I watched her face—‘I would tell you that I loved you dearly ; that I have worshipped you from afar off for so long, not daring to speak to you ; that I have always loved you, ever since I used to watch for you, years ago, coming down from Burnham. And if we were there, by ourselves, you would not be angry with me, I think, if I said all that. You might tell me to leave you ; but you would grant something to the love that I have for you, and let us part as friends.’

Then I knew that her eyes had come back from the picture, and were looking at me earnestly and sadly ; and her face was pale.

‘You would say that if we were in Germany?’ she said, in her low, tender tones.

‘And you would believe what I said,’ I answered, looking into her beautiful face.

‘But it is too soon to say it here, in England?’

With that she rose, and turned away, so that I could not meet her eyes to learn what she was thinking. But at the same moment I saw her rapidly take off one of her gloves; and somehow, before I knew what had occurred, the pale little token was lying just beside my hand, where she had dropped it.

Then she went, and I remained for a second or two, stupified, and scarcely daring to believe that I was in actual, secret possession of this glove. I rose, stunned with a new, bewildering sense of joy that could find no outlet or expression; and I saw that she had joined Miss Lesley and Franz.

Did they notice how pale she was? Did they notice that one small hand was bare? That, at least, I saw, and my joy was unspeakable; for the little, white hand of my darling told me that the glove I held was real, and mine.

## CHAPTER XI.

### OUR TRUSTY COUSIN.

‘WHAT do you think, then, of England as a place to live in?’ I asked of Franz, as we stood on the deck of the Calais boat, and saw the wavering lights of Dover grow momentarily more and more dim in the distance.

‘I am not an Englishman,’ said Franz. ‘I can’t give you a decided opinion about a country, and its people, and its politics, from having stayed a week in it.’

‘Well, you can say whether you would like to remain a year or two in London, for example.’

‘I could not do it. London seems a nice

place for people with plenty of money and plenty of friends. For me, I should probably shoot myself after a month of it. How should I spend my evenings? I could not go to the theatres every night, even if they were better than they seem to be. Your music-halls are the natural resort of your young men who wish to amuse themselves in the evening; and they——'

Franz shrugged his shoulders.

'For my part,' he said, 'I did not understand the songs. Perhaps they were clever. But I do not see the reason why men and women should applaud and laugh merely because a man comes on the stage in the dress of a dandy. He can sing no more than a cow—the words of the song *may* be good——'

'My dear friend, the wit of the song lies in the colour and size of the singer's neckerchief.'

‘Then the outrageous indecency of the place, with the police stationed as guardians——’

‘But there is one where no such indecency is permitted——’

‘Why,’ said Franz, with another shrug, ‘if decency only means conjuring tricks, and ventriloquism, and the efforts of a man to swing chairs with his teeth, indecency is likely to be more popular. No, your London is not to me a lively place. It is too eager and busy, too hurried, and too ostentatious. I like your old country towns better; they look as if the people in them were content to live reasonably and peaceably. You—will you live in London or in that valley, when your *Lehrjahre* and *Wanderjahre* are all over?’

‘I? When a dozen years of hard work have brought me sufficient money to rent Burnham House, I mean to live there.’

‘The young lady does not mean to sell it, then?’

‘She will never sell it, if she can help it; and I fancy she will only let it until she has got as much money as will enable her to go back there, free from the difficulties in which her cousin entangled her.’

‘And in the meantime?’

‘In the meantime, she is going to live abroad—for the sake of cheapness, I suppose.’

‘Shall we see her in Munich?’ said Franz.

‘How should I know?’

‘She is interested in Munich, at all events,’ said Franz. ‘She sent that message to us at the gates of Burnham, just on the chance of our having come from Munich.’

‘How do you know?’

‘She told me yesterday morning, when she came into the room where Madame—your friend with the unpronounceable name—and I were. She recognised me at once. She

was very gracious to me, and we had a walk round the pictures; and I became so good friends with her that I wished I could have sat down and played my zither for her. But I saw that I made a blunder.'

'How?'

'I was telling her stories, prompted by the different pictures, you know; and I told her by accident of a poor ignorant devil of a painter down in Waldshut who was painting a crucifix, and put "R. S. V. P." instead of "I. N. R. I." over it. What was there in that? Nothing. But she did not like it, I could see; and I blamed myself for talking freely to one of your English ladies, without knowing their peculiar sensitiveness. Your Englishwomen seem very tender about their religion, and a little too apprehensive, I think, that you may be an enemy, when you are thinking of something quite different.'

'But the religion of the country rests with



them at present,' I said, 'and they do right to be vigilant sentinels. Whenever they imagine they see the figure of Irreverence stalking in the distance——'

'They raise a clamour like that which saved the Capitol,' said Franz.

I suppose Amphitrite must have heard this remark, and stirred up her husband to revenge her sex; for, as we neared the French coast, the motion of the vessel became much more marked, and Franz, against all persuasion, was fain to take the fatal step of going below. When he re-appeared, as the boat was being made fast to the stone walls of Calais pier, the glare of a lamp showed that his face was very white, and there was a general air of helplessness about his person.

'I won't go straight on to Cologne,' he said, when we got into the train. 'I shall stop the day in Brussels, and go on to-morrow.'

‘Very well,’ said I, ‘and you will give me a little dinner at the *Deux Rois*.’

We spent the day therefore in that most English of all foreign towns, and, having dined at the hostelry aforesaid, were going down to the Théâtre de la Monnaie. In passing through the Avenue de la Reine, which was crowded with people, who walked up and down and stared at each other and the glaring shops, Franz and I found ourselves behind three men who were clearly English in costume and appearance. At the first glance I fancied I recognised the figure of one of them; and as we drew nearer, he turned to look in at a cigar-shop. I saw then that he was a man of about thirty-five, dressed rather ostentatiously, who was more than suspected of being a billiard-sharper when we were at Brighton. At all events he was politely requested by more than one hotel-manager not to make his appearance

again in their billiard-rooms; and it was understood that he received the intimation meekly.

The second of the group was a handsome and healthy-looking boy of about eighteen, who was neatly and fashionably dressed, and who had an unmistakable look of virgin greenness about his face. He was a gentlemanly-looking lad, and his face gave you the impression that his sisters would probably be remarkably pretty. When he turned, also, to look in at the display of meerschaum-pipes in the tobacconist's window, I caught sight of his other companion. It was Alfred Burnham. He looked twenty years older than when I had seen him last; and there was a hard, hawk-like look about his face that was far from being prepossessing. He was well-dressed, too; but he had lost the swaggering air he used to assume.

What struck me as being very peculiar was the officious complaisance which both

these men paid to the boy between them. Alfred Burnham had never, as a rule, striven to make himself very agreeable to the people around him ; but now he was trying to look particularly amiable, and was doing his best to ingratiate himself with the young man beside him. So, also, with his friend from Brighton, whose eagerness to be of service was more that of a valet than of a companion.

The object of these favours did not seem quite to relish them. There was a certain coldness in his responses to this amiability ; but, all the same, he seemed to assent to a proposition that they made, and the three walked off together.

I told Franz who they were.

‘ Shall we follow them ? ’ he said.

‘ We may see more with them than in the theatre.’

We did follow them, and we had not to go far. They entered a restaurant, went

upstairs, and ordered some wine. It was rather a fashionable place; and, as the dining-rooms were downstairs, this room, with its red velvet chairs and couches and its small marble tables, was kept as a coffee and smoking room. It was a large place, and there were two or three people in it, some talking, others smoking and playing dominoes. Franz and I sat down at one of the tables out in the middle of the floor, where there was least light; while we could easily see the other three, who were under the glare of the reflection from the white wall. We could also hear what they said, at times; as they seemed to have every confidence in no one but themselves understanding English.

They played dominoes, at five francs the game, and fifty centimes each time a double-six was played. This comparatively harmless form of amusement was proceeded with

for some time, while wine was liberally drunk. It was noticeable, however, that, out of mere courtesy, Alfred Burnham kept his young friend's glass constantly filled; and, as the latter was smoking what seemed a strong and oily cigar, he drank at the same time a good deal of the sparkling, pale wine that was so generously offered him.

'I have won eight francs,' said Burnham, with a laugh. 'I must go home now, and carry off my winnings. How much have you won, my lord?'

'Twenty-six or twenty-seven,' said the young man, with a louder laugh; and his eyes were now flushed.

'Then I must be the loser,' said the eldest of the three, with a resigned air. 'Such is luck. Shall we go back to the hotel now, Sir Charles?'

So Mr. Burnham had become Sir Charles Somebody.

‘Yes,’ said Sir Charles, rising, and concealing a yawn; ‘I feel rather tired.’

‘Let us make a sweepstakes of our winnings, Sir Charles,’ said the young man. ‘I will put my twenty-six francs against your eight, and we will cut for it.’

‘I could not be guilty of such a piece of robbery,’ said Burnham, with another laugh. ‘But if you mean to cut until one of us shall have lost his winnings, let us do it with cards. Here, *garçon!*’

‘*Oui, m’sieur!*’

‘Allez, apportez-moi—achetez pour moi un—un—un jeu de cartes anglaises; comprenez-vous? Il faut qu’elles soient neuves.’

‘*Bien, m’sieur!*’

Burnham turned to his companions with a sort of apology for his hesitating French, and remarked that it was a pity all the world had not been born in Buckinghamshire.

‘You know Bucks?’ said the young man,

with a vinous delight. 'Why, there is no one in the county I don't know. Are you acquainted with the Beckfords?'

'No,' replied Alfred Burnham, hastily. 'I said Bucks by chance. I know little of the county beyond having ridden through it once or twice. I am from the north.'

'From the fens, or the Ridings, or——'

'Westmoreland,' said Sir Charles; and then he abruptly changed the subject.

The cards were brought, and some more wine. They cut for francs at first, and Sir Charles won. Then they cut for five francs, in order to get it over the sooner; and fortune kept pretty steady.

'You must let me join,' said the person from Brighton. 'I can't let you have all the fun to yourselves. Suppose that I, too, have won twenty-five francs; and let us go on cutting until some one has won the whole.'



‘Agreed,’ said Sir Charles; and they went on shuffling and cutting the cards.

Now this ingenious game of winning or losing money by cutting for the highest card is a sufficiently fair trial of chances, under ordinary circumstances; but the young gentleman who was thus amusing himself must have been particularly innocent when he did not perceive that the odds were considerably against his winning. He did not seem to reflect on the possibility of his two opponents being in collusion, however; and so they went on drinking and smoking and cutting the cards, until, by an easy transition, sovereigns came to be staked instead of francs, and at length I saw mysterious pieces of paper being handed across the table, with a scrawled signature thereon.

It did not occur to him to ask what was the value of the I O U’s against which he was staking his own signature.

‘Hadn’t we better stop?’ said the eldest of them.

‘No, no,’ said the young man, who was now half-tipsy. ‘Let us have one or two more—good big ones. I have lost t’ much. Luck must turn.’

But there was no luck in the matter. There was a dead certainty of his losing; and he lost.

‘How these things mount up, with your confounded “double or quits!”’ said Burnham to his colleague. ‘Do you know how much money I have won from you?’

‘Haven’t the faintest idea!’ said the other; and, indeed, there was little reason why he should care.

‘One hundred and thirty-two pounds, as near as I can make out.’

‘The devil!’

‘And how much do I owe you, my lord?’ said Burnham.

The young man pushed all the bits of paper over to him.

‘Look for yourself!’ he said, with an indolent, intoxicated gesture. ‘I can’t make head or tail of them.’

Alfred Burnham looked over the papers.

‘By Jove!’ he said, ‘I find that I owe you 60*l*. Shall I give an I O U for the amount to Mr. Temple, and that will be so much towards what you owe him? Then he can arrange with me, when he pays me what he owes me.’

‘All right, all right; it will save trouble. Then I owe you something still, Mr.—Mr. Temple?’

‘Yes, my lord,’ said Temple, calmly holding out certain pieces of paper. ‘I find here I O U’s for 380*l*. With the 60*l*. deducted, the amount will be 320*l*.’

The boy was sobered in an instant.

‘Three hundred and twenty!’ he said, as

he rose to his feet, with his face blanched—perhaps more with anger than with dismay.

I think he would have broken into some angry denunciations but that both of the two men kept their eyes fixed on him, and Temple said, coldly—

‘Yes, my lord, that is the sum. Will you give me a note of hand for the whole amount, or shall I call upon you at your hotel with these papers?’

‘Come to my hotel to-morrow morning,’ said the lad; and the way in which he said so showed that he now perceived the character of the men with whom he was dealing.

At this moment I walked over to the small table at which they sat, and lit a bit of paper at the gas overhead. While doing so I looked at Alfred Burnham, and he grew suddenly pale.

‘Ah, how do you do, Mr. Burnham?’ I

said; 'who would have expected to see you in Brussels?'

The boy looked on in amazement. To hear Sir Charles addressed as Mr. Burnham told him whatever he had not already divined.

'Who the —— are you! I don't know you!' said Burnham, furiously.

'I am sorry for that,' I said, lighting my cigar, 'for I have just seen several of your friends in England, who would be glad of your address. They seem to have lost sight of you since you left—Westmoreland.'

I had nearly said Burnham, but I remembered on the instant that the young lord had boasted of his acquaintance with every family in Bucks, and I thought that he might connect this man with the lady who was known to be the mistress of Burnham House. Had I had less interest in the matter, I should have been even then loth to have Hester Burnham

recognised as a friend or relative of a common swindler. Meanwhile, the hint about his address seemed to have maddened him. He swore a furious oath, and jumped to his feet. Franz came over just then, and also produced a cigar.

‘Was wünscht der Dummkopf?’ he said, coolly.

‘For God’s sake, let us have no fighting,’ said Temple.

‘As you please,’ I said; ‘but perhaps you will give this young gentleman your real names and addresses when next you play with him. And perhaps, before he pays you to-morrow, he will get somebody to enquire about them. Good evening, Mr. Burnham.’

So Franz and I turned and left.

‘Lucky for you,’ said Franz, ‘that Burnham hadn’t a revolver in his pocket. I never saw a man so clearly look murder as he did just now.’

The lad who had been playing with them came running down after us, and overtook us just as we were leaving.

‘What am I to do?’ he said, ‘what am I to do? I have been swindled. I have been robbed.’

‘You might have found that out a little earlier,’ said I.

‘But I won’t pay these I O U’s——’

‘You will be a considerable ass if you do. Go straight up to the Commissary of Police; state your case, and ask his advice. If either calls for payment in the morning—which is far from likely—refer him to your friend the Commissary, and recommend him to leave Brussels.’

‘How can I ever thank you sufficiently? It is not the amount, but the disgrace of being swindled, that I should have dreaded. How can I repay you?’

‘Well, in this way. When you tell your

English friends how two of your countrymen tried to swindle you, don't say that one of them was called Burnham. He will achieve fame soon enough. That is all I ask of you.'

'I promise, faithfully. But—but won't you come and dine with me?'

I believe the boy was actually afraid of being left alone, lest his friends the card-players should follow and threaten him.

'Thank you,' I said; 'I fancied you had dined sufficiently before you sat down to play cards with two strangers. And we were going to the theatre, when the amusement of watching you and them enticed us to wait. We shall be in time for the operetta, however; and so, good-night!'

'Good-night; and thank you very much.'

'Your English families should keep their children in the nursery until they are able to take care of themselves out-of-doors,' said Franz.



## CHAPTER XII.

## IN MUNICH AGAIN.

LINELE was in a particularly kindly mood when we arrived. Franz had merely called at his lodgings in passing, to leave his luggage and top-coat, and bring his zither with him : then we drove on in the droschke to the Königin-Strasse, and made our appearance in the Professor's house.

Lena received us with the dignity of a small empress. She allowed Franz to kiss her hand ; and answered in a stately manner his enquiries after the health of Annele. But her decorum quite broke down when Franz took out of a box a remarkably pretty fan, and presented it to her. She looked at it all

round, and opened it, and shut it, and then kissed it affectionately, and put it in the box again. I think she would have kissed Franz, too, if nobody had been by; for had he not brought a handsome volume of engravings for the Herr Papa, and a wonderful case of housewifely implements, all real English cutlery, for the Frau Mamma? No prospective son-in-law could have done more.

The evening was devoted to the questioning of Franz about his foreign experiences. The Professor would know everything about the galleries, and the architecture of the principal towns, and so forth; Linele's mamma was curious to know how people lived in a land that was so full of money—what and when they ate, and whether everything was comfortable in proportion to its expense; while Lena herself would know how the young ladies of London looked, and where they walked in the constant rains and

fogs, and what sort of dresses they wore in such a climate. Then she took out the fan again, and asked Franz if he had seen the opera-house filled with the richest ladies in the world, and whether they were all loaded with diamonds, and gleaming in white satins and silks.

‘Papa,’ cried Linele, petulantly, ‘I don’t believe he has been in England at all. He has seen nothing different, nothing strange; and I believe they have been away hiding somewhere, to escape their painting, and play billiards and go to the theatre. It is wicked of them to deceive us, isn’t it, papa? And you won’t take the engravings, will you?—and I will give him back the fan, for it never came from England, I know!’

The Professor looked up in mute bewilderment. He had been looking at an engraving of one of Turner’s Italian landscapes, and had got lost there. But the mamma said—

‘Now, now, Linele, don’t bother Mr. Frank, when he has been so kind to you. And you have never even thanked Mr. Edward for the pretty necklace he has given you——’

‘But I have put it round my neck : isn’t that enough for him?’ said Linele, proudly.

‘And, instead of bothering the gentlemen, you might go and get up two bottles of the red Rhine-wine, since this is a grand occasion——’

‘But we have just been drinking beer as we came along,’ said Franz.

‘That doesn’t matter,’ said the Frau Professor with a sage nod of the head. ‘You know what they say—

Wein auf Bier, das rathe ich dir ;  
Bier auf Wein, das lass’t du sein ?

There is sense in that. Go along with you, Lena, and make yourself useful.’

Presently Lena appeared, making a great fuss about carrying the two bottles of Assmanshäuser, and pretending to be greatly fatigued by their weight. Then she placed them jauntily on the table, and went for glasses, and put them down with a saucy air.

‘In England, young ladies don’t wait upon gentlemen,’ said Lena, with a toss of her head.

‘More’s the pity, then,’ said her mother, sharply. ‘What do they do, then, I wonder?’

‘They drive in carriages, and dress in silk, and sit at table like queens, and have all the gentlemen serve them,’ said Linele.

‘And have the gentlemen nothing to do, either?’ said the mamma, with a touch of scorn.

‘They can’t do anything better than wait upon ladies,’ retorted Linele.

‘Your head is full of wool, Lena,’ said the

mamma ; and that stopped the discussion for the moment.

So we settled down to our ordinary work again ; and in process of time I got my 'Wölundur' finished. The Professor had taken great interest in the progress of the work, and had materially helped me by plenty of sound suggestion and able criticism. I was beginning to feel my way more surely now and to be able to test in a measure the value of what I was doing. 'Kilmeny' had been more of a surprise to myself than it could have been to anybody else ; but the technical knowledge I had acquired under the Professor's care, added to the effect of his lectures upon the various qualities of the Pinathothek masters, gave me a better notion of what I could do, and what I could not do, myself. I knew that this picture was freer in manner and altogether more mature than its predecessor ; and I

was so far convinced of this that I formed the project of offering 'Wölundur' to Mr. Webb in exchange for 'Kilmeny,' which I was desirous, for many reasons, of getting into my own hands.

When it was finished, I consigned the picture to Heatherleigh's care. He had undertaken to send it into the Academy. In the interim, however, I received a long letter from him, expressing his own opinions about the thing, and saying that he had shown it, among others, to the Jew-dealer whom I knew.

'He offers you,' he wrote, 'four hundred guineas for the work. I hope your brain won't be turned by the announcement, which means more than you fancy. Old Solomons pays a man according to the reputation he has made; merely because it is that alone which has any weight with the majority of his customers; and therefore you

may have some idea of what "Kilmeny" has earned for you. But I would not close with him if I were you. Send the picture into the Academy, and let it take its chance. If it does what I expect it will do, you will be inundated with commissions, which, for yet a year or two, you should undertake most sparingly. The results of your stay in Munich are apparent in every part of this picture,' &c. &c.

He was strongly opposed to my bartering the picture for 'Kilmeny;' but seeing that I persisted in the notion, he went to Mr. Webb and laid the matter before him. Then, as before and since, that gentleman acted in a manner which anyone, regarding his dry, timid manner, and cold look, would scarcely have expected from him. That is to say, instead of treating me, a stranger to him, in an ordinary businesslike fashion, he showed a frank generosity and fairness which, I



regret to say, surprised me. For I had not met many English gentlemen ; and there still hung about me a half-conscious apprehension, begotten of my experience of Weavle, that every stranger to you must necessarily be on the outlook to take advantage of you for his own benefit.

As before, Mr. Webb placed himself, as a purchaser, in open competition with everybody else. Having seen the picture, he expressed his willingness to give as much for it as any purchaser might offer after it had been exhibited in the Academy—then to deduct from this sum the price he had paid for ‘Kilmeny,’ and send me the latter picture, with the difference in money.

The difference, when it came, was nearly two hundred guineas. The draft was made payable on a Munich banker ; and when I got the slip of paper, I endeavoured to

fancy myself ten years younger, and to picture what I should have thought in Weavle's shop of becoming the owner of such a sum.

'Kilmeny,' for the present, was to remain with Mr. Webb; it was useless to send it over to Munich, when in a few months, I might be returning to England.

On receipt of this money, I kept up a good old English custom in a foreign land. I invited the Professor, his wife, and Lena, Franz, Silber, and one or two others, to a dinner at a restaurant. The little black-eyed actress could not be persuaded to come, notwithstanding it was represented to her that we should be in a private room, and unseen by the vulgar gossips of the city. She pleaded a late rehearsal, though I fancy her mamma's notions of propriety had something to do with it.

We were a very merry party; and even

Silber forgot to look miserable, and was for carrying his complaisance to the extent of singing a song after a dinner—a gratification which we managed to escape. Instead we all went over to a box which I had secured at the Hof-Theater ; and there Linele, who had dressed her hair in the English fashion, sat like a little princess at the front of the box, and displayed the gleaming fan that Franz had given her.

It was 'Linda' they sang ; and the good mamma sat and cried a little, covertly, over the pretty story of Linda's trials, and faithfulness, and ultimate reward.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## KILMENY COMES HOME.

WAS I free at last, only to be tired of my freedom? I could go where I liked; I could spend my time as it pleased me; I had money at command, and was my own master; I was afraid of no man, and knew that I had the power to compel the future to be serviceable to me, so that I could take up my abode in any part of Europe, and feel sure of being able to live there in comfort and peace.

Or I could travel about from city to city, from village to village, stopping here and there as I chose, and seeing men and manners and things. The world was before me;

and, in so much as I cared for it, I was its master. I could make it yield me the things that I wanted, for my needs were not great. The chiefest of them had been all along this freedom from control, and now I had achieved it.

I had achieved it only to find that independence meant isolation. There were no kindly bonds of duty governing my daily actions, and yielding the pleasures of self-sacrifice. There was no obligation connected with my art-efforts ; on the contrary, they were the keenest delight I experienced, and following them was in no sense a duty. Outside of this pursuit, I had nothing particular to live for ; and I was beginning to weary of too much content, that poor sort of sunshine that lights up the narrow world of selfishness.

‘ Will Hester Burnham ever come to redeem her pledge ? ’ I used to think. ‘ Will it

ever happen that the dream I dreamt in the Tyrol will come true, and we together shall go down through the wonderful valley, all by ourselves? Will it ever happen that each day shall be filled with the numberless duties of love; and that I shall have to watch over my darling, and tend her, and keep her safe from the cold winds and the rain?’

There was no sign or word from her away in England. The many letters I got from various people mentioned her only by chance, and then said nothing definite. She was supposed to be waiting to see how matters should be arranged about the letting of Burnham, and the clearance of the obligations which her cousin’s kindness had imposed upon her. Indeed, my correspondents were too busy to waste much time in speculation. Bonnie Lesley was preparing for her marriage; Heatherleigh had married, and was engaged in decorating with his own handi-

work a small house he had bought up at Hampstead. He and Polly had persuaded my mother to go and live with them ; for Polly, said Heatherleigh, would bother him all day in his studio unless she had somebody else to talk to and make jokes with.

‘ But you ought not to take a mother-in-law into your house,’ said my mother, with a smile.

‘ But I shall want all your help,’ said Polly, wickedly. ‘ For you don’t know what a miser he has grown of late ; and unless we are two to one, it will be impossible to keep the house in any comfort. Do you know, my dear, that five minutes after we were married, he took off his gloves, rolled them up, and put them in his pocket, saying they would do for the first time we went to the theatre ? Did miserliness ever go further ; and on his marriage-day, too ? ’

I learned, indeed, from my mother that

Polly regarded her housekeeping as an elaborate joke, and that she spent the better part of the day in laughing over the eccentricities of an Irish maid-servant who was in the house, and in laying traps to exhibit the artless blunders of that young woman. Yet Polly, in spite of her imitations of the butcher-boy, and her fits of laughter over the courtesies of the milk-man to the Irish maid-servant aforesaid, looked sharply and actively after her domestic affairs, and made a capital wife. Heatherleigh, too, I heard, had grown ten years younger since his marriage; and he and Polly, when all the day's work of each was over, and when they sat down to supper, were in the habit of conducting themselves pretty much like a couple of children, instead of two grown-up and married persons.

Such was the news that came from England; and I was glad that, amid the din and



clamour of eager money-getting, there were some who could find a quiet household for themselves, and peace therein. As for the houseless one—where was she?

I forgot now to look with any interest across the trees of the ‘English garden.’ I had lost all hope of seeing her walk across that patch of level green; not that her coming was any less likely than it had ever been, but that I had grown to see that it had never been likely. The time for such miracles was over, and it did no good to dream of them.

But one morning, as I was passing through the Promenaden-Platz, on my way to the Nibelungen frescoes, I saw two ladies pass into the courtyard of the Bavarian Hotel. I only caught a glimpse of them as they turned the corner; and yet that glimpse made my heart beat. If it were really she, at last, and the small Madame Laboureau?

I walked up to the front of the courtyard, and looked in. There was no one there but the ordinary troupe of commissionaires, portiers, and droschke-drivers. I begged permission, however, to look over the large board, on which the names of the various visitors at the hotels are inscribed. I hurriedly went over the bits of pasteboard—meeting with French countesses, German barons, Russian princes, and what not; but there was no mention of the name I looked for. So I turned away. It was not the first time I had been mistaken in fancying I saw the slight, graceful figure I knew so well in the streets of Munich.

I went along to the Festsaalbau, met the Professor and one or two of his students, and remained there for about an hour. Then we left; and, as the others were going down to the old Pinathothek, I set out for a saunter up to the Isar.

I suppose you know the Max-Joseph's Platz—the splendid square which is surrounded by the palace and the theatre and the post-office, which looks like another palace. As I turned into this square—all bright and clear as it was in the sunlight—I saw, crossing the corner and coming towards me, the figure I had seen in the morning. Was it true, then, that the wandering possibility that had haunted me through all these long months, was at last real and true? Was Hester Burnham really in Munich; and should I actually hear her speak, away over here, in this strange land?

I hastened after her, as she went across the square, towards the Maximilien-Strasse. She glanced up at the statue of the king, and I saw the outline of her features. Then I overtook her, and she stopped, and I found her hand in mine. There was a pale, strange joy in her face.

‘You have come to me at last,’ I said.

‘Yes.’

‘For altogether?’

It was her eyes that spoke the answer ; and there, in the open streets of Munich, I could have knelt down and kissed her hand.

She and Madame Laboureau had arrived that morning ; the hotel people had not yet had time to put their names up. Madame was fatigued ; and Hester had come out alone to buy some gloves—hence the meeting. But when I enquired of her what had brought her to Munich, she looked up, somewhat reproachfully, and asked, in that low and tender voice of hers, if I had not expected her. We forgot about these gloves. We wandered away from the city, and past the gates and the suburban houses. There was a clear blue sky overhead, and occasionally a flock of pigeons whirring past and

gleaming in the white sunlight. She and I had a whole life-time to settle, and how fair was that future that lay before us ! The light of it shone in her wistful eyes, even while the English modulations of her voice, grown almost unfamiliar to my ear, recalled England and all the bygone years.

Weavle had at last been cast behind, like Satan. The old days in that Holborn workshop were like a nightmare that had fled before the morning sunlight. But do not think that this deliverance was due to the fact that I had now more money than I had then. God forbid that I should have written this history of my life, if I had so poor a triumph to tell in the end. It needed none of Heatherleigh's teaching to show me that money was not the thing that made life most beautiful and valuable; and, as Hester and I spoke of the years that were to come, and as I told her how I had escaped from the

stifling atmosphere that hung over the bitter struggle for existence in England, into the sweeter and serener air that now surrounded us, it was no hope of riches that lit up the prospect for us, and no desire of wealth that promised to be the stimulant of our future. Yet we were bold enough to think that some measure of good purpose might be done by us, whether we lived in England or elsewhere, if we could only shed around us the influences of two lives wisely and honestly lived, and made honourable and noble by the kindly servitude of love.

It was not very long after this time that I told my darling a story. She and I were at Rolandseck, over the Rhine, and we were all by ourselves there. It was late on in the autumn, and all the herd of tourists had gone home ; I think we were the only visitors at the Hôtel Billau, which overlooks the river. The nights were drawing in now ;

and when dinner was over, and we went out upon the balcony, it was quite dark, and we could scarcely see the great stream, though we heard its rippling down in front of us. But the moon was slowly rising behind the heights of Rolandseck ; and so I wrapped my little friend in comfortable shawls and furs, and together we waited for the cold light.

How still it was, and how beautiful too, when the calm, wonderful radiance came over the hills behind, and showed us the magical picture that lay around us. Far in the distance, touched here and there with the moonlight, the great Drachenfels rose from over the river up into the dark, starlit sky. Down at our feet the broad, still stream ran softly past, until it smote and quivered in silver along the shores of the island of Nonnenwerth, that lay out there, half hid in a pale, mystical haze. And high

over the island rose behind us, sharp and black, the wooded peak on which the Knight Roland built his tower, that so he might look down on his love, and watch her as she came out with her sister-nuns to walk round the cloisters of Nonnenwerth—until, at last, he saw her funeral procession, and never spoke more. Keener and clearer grew the light, until it shone on the grey buildings of the island, and gleamed along the river that encircled it. Here and there, too, were specks of orange light visible on the opposite bank, where some cluster of cottages lay under the shadow of the mighty Drachenfels; and we could hear, far down the stream, the sound of some boatmen singing, as they moored their barges close in by the shore.

There was no need of much talking on such a night; it was enough to sit, one great shawl over both of us, and look on the



wonderful river, and the hills, and the stars. But my darling, nestling close and warm under her manifold plaids, bade me tell her yet one more tale; and, as I had exhausted all I knew of Rhenish legendary lore, I told her a story of England. And it was this :—

*‘ There was once a boy who used to wander all over the country by night; and he fell in love with a star. And he said—*

*“ Oh, you beautiful small creature! come down and be my companion, and we will go through the world together, all these coming years.”*

*‘ But, as he walked on, he saw a Will-o’-the-wisp shining in the dark, and he said—*

*“ Oh, you wonderful creature! with your bright eyes and your streaming hair, I have never seen anything so beautiful as you. Come, and we will go through the world together, all these coming years.”*

*‘So they travelled on together. But in a little while the Will-o’-the-wisp began to flicker up and down, and finally flew over a hedge and disappeared; and he was left in the dark.*

*‘Then he looked up, and lo! above him there still shone the star, and it was as gracious and as beautiful as ever. And he said—*

*“Oh, you dear small creature! will you forgive me for what I have done; and will you always look down on me as you do now, and I shall look up to you, and love you?”’*

That was the question I asked of my darling as we sat together there, under the shadows of Rolandseck. It is some time since then; and I who write these words am still looking up to this beautiful creature, who has never ceased to shed her soft radiance around me. Perhaps she is a little

nearer earth now—but that has only enlarged her brightness; and, thinking over all these things, and of her great affection, forbearance, and sweetness, how can I help regarding her, my most tender and faithful friend, with admiration and wonder and love?

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